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1 WESTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE
2 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

3
4 PUBLIC MEETING

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6
7 VOLUME I

8
9 PYKE'S WATERFRON LODGE
10 Fairbanks, Alaska
11 February 25, 2025
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14

15 COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

16 Jack L. Reakoff, Chairman
17 Donald V. Honea, Jr.
18 Pollock Simon, Sr.
19 Robert Walker
20 Timmthy P. Gervais
21 Tommy Kriska
22 Jenny K. Pelkola

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26 Regional Council Coordinator, Nissa Pilcher
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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Fairbanks, Alaska - 2/25/2025)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: All right, Thank you. So, we're going to bring the meeting to order. It's a little after 9:00. So, we're in Pike's Waterfront Lodge in Fairbanks today and tomorrow and we'll be doing the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council winter meeting. So, we're going to go through the agenda -- the invocation. Would you like to do an invocation, Jenny?

(Pause)

So, call to order. Meeting is called to order and housekeeping announcements, Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: Good morning, everyone. This is Nissa Pilcher for the record, Council Coordinator for the Western Interior. This is the Western Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting. For those joining us on the phone, you can find the agenda and meeting materials online on the Federal Subsistence Program website. That address is www.doi.gov/subsistence under the Regions tab, choose Western Interior and then Meeting Materials. For all the participants on the phone -- sorry, I'm going to scoot in. Please remember to mute your phones when you are not speaking. If you do not have a mute button on your phone, you can press star-six and that will mute and also unmute your phone.

For those -- sorry reading my script. Also, for those in the room, the meeting materials are also located on the side table as well as a sign in. So, if folks could please sign in as well, that would be appreciated. So, a current membership update. So as everyone knows, this Council does have ten seats. Currently only eight of those are filled. The application deadline was February 16th so we're now past it. Hopefully those two vacancies will be filled by any applications, but I won't know any of that information until your fall -- well, maybe not even at your fall meeting until we get the notice from Department of Interior. So, just as a reminder, Council functions best with the robust and diverse membership and hopefully soon we will have Kuskokwim representation. Moving forward, any assistance in helping spread the word about

1 applying to sit on the Council would be appreciated. Not
2 only Council members but also agency, NGO, tribal
3 partners, anyone. And again, thank you, member Kriska,
4 for your help in the arena. You have channeled several
5 people in my direction, and I do appreciate that. So,
6 anyone listening or present, please feel free to hand
7 out my contact information and I'll work with anyone
8 interested in getting a hold of applications and getting
9 them submitted during the appropriate time. So, anyone
10 wishing to address the Council on non-agenda topics,
11 there will be an opportunity for this later today after
12 the Council member reports. At that time, the Chair will
13 announce this opportunity and call on individuals who
14 wish to address the Council. For folks here in person,
15 please fill out a blue card, hence the name because they
16 are blue cards, located on that information table to
17 indicate your wish to address the Council, either during
18 this time or during a specific agenda topic. And then
19 you can hand them to anyone from OSM and we will do
20 meeting -- room introductions here shortly. We will
21 relay that information to the Chair. The Chair will also
22 ask if there is anyone on the phone that would like to
23 provide comments after people comment in person. For
24 those on the phone who would like to speak, please press
25 star five to raise your hand and wait to be recognized
26 before speaking. When this happens, please identify
27 yourself for the record by stating your first and last
28 name and if you are representing an affiliation other
29 than yourself. If you would like to submit written
30 comments instead, or in addition to oral comments, you
31 may turn those into any OSM staff in this room or email
32 them to subsistence@ios.doi.gov. Also, make sure you
33 include your name and affiliation on those as well.

34
35 So, a quick reminder on Council member
36 conduct and ethics. So, our meetings are conducted by
37 Robert's Rules, which help us provide structure and
38 maintain order throughout the meeting. All participants,
39 including Council members, staff and public members, are
40 expected to be courteous and respectful in all
41 interactions as a matter of meeting etiquette. It is
42 understood that the nature of some of the issues
43 discussed at these meetings can be difficult and
44 controversial, and although some comments shared
45 throughout this meeting may be passionate, no insults
46 or foul language will be tolerated in the public meeting.
47 So, if any kind of unruly behavior or insulting language
48 from anyone occurs during the meeting, please be advised
49 that I, operating as a designated federal office would
50 need to intervene.

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All right, there is a quick note I would like to make. There's going to be an evening session tonight. It's going to be an outreach and engagement session between this Council and members of the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council that will start in this room at 6:30 tonight. So, the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council is currently considering new management approaches to reduce chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea Pollock Fishery and that analysis and management action is ongoing by that body. At its October 2024 meeting, the North Pacific Council discussed opportunities for outreach and engagement on the chum salmon bycatch issue, and staff contacted myself and Brooke McDavid, who coordinates the Eastern Interior and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Councils about moving forward with available North Pacific Council members, as well as their analytical staff attending these Council meetings to provide a presentation on the current analysis. This will be an opportunity for the Council to discuss the issue with the North Pacific Council members in attendance. Please be aware that the members of the North Pacific Council that are attending do not make up a quorum of that Council, and the session is not testimony to the North Pacific Council as a whole if public testimony -- if there is time for public testimony. That session will break for the evening by 8:30 tonight, as we still do have a full day tomorrow. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for allowing me the time to share this information.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Nissa. And so, we're going to call, roll and move into election of officers. Would you like to call roll? Go ahead, Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa Pilcher, for the record. Don Honea, Jr.

MR. HONEA: Here.

MS. PILCHER: Pollock Simon, Sr.

MR. SIMON: Here.

MS. PILCHER: Jack Reakoff.

MR. REAKOFF: Here.

MS. PILCHER: Robert Walker.

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MR. WALKER: Yes.

MS. PILCHER: Tim Gervais.

MR. GERVAIS: Here.

MS. PILCHER: Jenny Pelkola

MS. PELKOLA: Here.

MS. PILCHER: Tommy Kriska

MR. KRISKA: here.

MS. PILCHER: and then Darrell Vent, are you online?

(No response)

All right. Darrel is attending a YR DFA meeting at the same time so I believe he'll be in and out and he should be physically present tomorrow. But, with seven members of eight seated, we do have a quorum.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, thank you, Nissa. So, election of officers after we established the quorum. And so, the election of the Chair, I turn that over to you, go ahead.

MS. PILCHER: All right, again, Nissa Pilcher, for the record, I have this -- flip flop to something else in my notes. But -- so this is Nissa, Council Coordinator with OSM. In accordance with the Council Charter, Council members elect a Chair, a Vice Chair and a secretary for a one-year term during the winter meeting. Member Reakoff is the current Chair; member Pelkola is the current Vice Chair and member Vent is the current Secretary. At this time, I would like to open the floor for nominations for the Council's Chair. Please keep in mind the nominations do not need to be seconded in this case.

MR. HONEA: Madam Chair, I nominate Jack for Chair -- Chairperson.

MR. WALKER: I second it.

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1 MS. PILCHER: Well, thank you member
2 Honea for the motion and member Walker for the second.
3 Are there any others?

4
5 MR. HONEA: Motion to close.

6
7 MR. WALKER: Second.

8
9 MS. PILCHER: All right, I believe that
10 means that since there's only one nomination then we can
11 move forward, and I can turn the mic back over to Chair
12 Reakoff.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We should vote.

15
16 MS. PILCHER: Okay.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I will -- maybe
19 somebody who doesn't want me to be Chair.
20 (Indiscernible) we have a new administration, want the
21 record to be clear.

22
23 MR. WALKER: I believe the majority rule.

24
25 MS. PILCHER: How about -- we can do --
26 by everyone in favor, say aye.

27
28 IN UNISON: Aye.

29
30 MS: PILCHER: Everyone opposed, say aye
31 now.

32
33 (No response)

34
35 All right.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're going to have
38 to have a clear record for this meeting because we're
39 under a microscope at this time. So, we want to make
40 sure that everything is going well so that -- we're
41 going to -- this -- Chair now. Thank you very much. I
42 appreciate your confidence. Open the floor for
43 nominations for Vice Chair.

44
45 MR. KRISKA: I nominate Jenny for Vice
46 Chair.

47
48 MR. SIMON: I second.

49
50 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Any other

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1 nominations?

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MR. KRISKA: Nominations closed.

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MR. SIMON: Second that.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Nominations closed. Those -- Well, again, I would like a vote. Those in favor of Jenny being Vice Chair signify by saying aye.

10

11

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IN UNISON: Aye.

13

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed Same sign.

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16

(No response)

17

18

Okay, Thank you very much, Jenny.

19

20

MS. PILCHER: And for the record, that was member Kriska that made the initial motion and member Pollock that made the second.

22

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24

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, for Secretary -- current secretary is Darrell. And so, the Chair will open the floor for nomination for Secretary. You nominating Darrell?

27

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29

MR. WALKER: I nominate Darrell.

30

31

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: All right.

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MR. KRISKA: Second.

34

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Any other nominations for Secretary?

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(No response)

39

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Okay.

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MR. WALKER: Move to close.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Move to close. We have a second for that?

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47

MR. KRISKA: Second.

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49

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Those in Favor of Darrel as Secretary for the Western Interior

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1 Council signify by saying aye.

2

3 IN UNISON: Aye.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed?

6

7 MR. GERVIAS: Aye.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Opposed
10 same sign. Your affirmative vote, tight, Tim?

11

12 MR. GERVIAS: Yes, I was aye on the
13 affirmative.

14

15 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right, Okay.

16

17 MS. PILCHER: Just to clarify, I believe
18 it was Member Walker that made the original motion and
19 member Kriska that seconded. Okay, yes. Correct.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah. So,
22 elections are accomplished. We have quorum, meeting
23 announcement, we've done that. Welcome and introduction.
24 So, I would like to know who's on the phone. I know I
25 have Tim on the phone. Did you join Darrell? Darrell's
26 still off. Who else is on the phone with us this morning?
27 Give your name and your affiliation.

28

29 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa. Jack If
30 you'd like, I can run through a list.....

31

32 (Simultaneous speech)

33

34 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Nissa.

35

36 MS. PILCHER:I might streamline
37 things. So, if there's anyone listening that is not
38 representing anybody that is just a member of the public,
39 if they could introduce themselves right now.

40

41 All right, and if I start going too fast
42 and I jump over someone that hasn't got the opportunity
43 to unmute themselves, please feel free to just pipe up
44 when you can. So, the next is there anyone on with tribal
45 governments or native organizations?

46

47 MS. ERICKSON: Good morning. This is
48 Diloola Erickson with Tanana Chiefs Conference, and I
49 think we got Brian Lepping on with us for Tanana Chiefs
50 Conference.

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MS. PILCHER: Good morning, Diloolo and Brian. Anyone else in that category?

MS. HERZNER: Yeah. This is Katie Herzner with the Intertribal Agriculture Council.

(Pause)

MS. PILCHER: All right, thanks for joining, Katie. I don't believe I've heard, or I haven't -- I'm not as familiar with your organization. I'll have to Google it on a break. Anybody on representing a non-government agency?

(No response)

All right, how about Alaska Department of Fish and Game?

MR. NELSON: This is Mark Nelson with the Fish and Game and Fairbanks wildlife. And I'll be there in person tomorrow.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Welcome, Mark.

MR. BEMBENIC: Good morning. This is Tim Bembenic with Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Subsistence division. I'll also be attending tomorrow.

MS. FISHER: Hi, this is Brooke Fisher with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, in the Subsistence Division as well and I will also be there tomorrow.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning. Anybody else with ADF&G?

(No response)

MS. PILCHER: All right, how about Bureau of Indian Affairs?

(no response)

All right, how about Bureau of Land Management? And once again, as a reminder, it is star six to mute and unmute. Unless your phone has a capability or if you're on teams and you have to hit the microphone. So, Bureau of land management.

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(no response)

National Park service?

(no response)

MS. FLOREY: Good morning, it's Victoria Florey National Park Service down here in Anchorage.

MS. PILCHER: How about U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. KLEIN: Good morning.

MR. RANSBURRY: Good morning

MS. KLEIN: Oops. This is Jill Klein. I'm the regional Subsistence coordinator based in Anchorage listening in for today and tomorrow. Thanks.

MR. RANSBURRY: Good morning. This is Shane Ransbury. I'm a fishery biologist for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service here in Fairbanks and I'll be in this afternoon. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning, Shane.

MR. HARRIS: Good morning, this is Frank Harris, fish biologist with the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Southern Alaska Fish and Wildlife field Office in Soldotna, Alaska.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning, Frank. Anybody else with Fish and Wildlife?

MR. MOSES: This is Aaron Moses fisheries Subsistence specialist at Yukon Delta.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning, Aaron.

MR. MOSES: Morning.

MS. BECK: Good morning. This is Lori Beck, also with Yukon Delta Refuge, deputy refuge manager.

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1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning,
2 Lori.

3
4 MR. HAVENER: Hey. Good morning. This is
5 Jeremy Havener. I'm the refuge Subsistence coordinator
6 for Koyukuk, Nowitna, and Innoko National Wildlife
7 Refuge and on here with us is our RIT Marie Cleaver,
8 also attending.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning,
11 Jeremy. Anybody else, U.S. Fish and Wildlife?

12
13 (no response)

14
15 MS. PILCHER: All right, how about U.S.
16 Forest Service?

17
18 MR. RISDAHL: Good morning, Nissa. This
19 is Greg Risdahl, Subsistence program lead for the Forest
20 Service and ISC and I'll be joining you today and
21 tomorrow, Thank you.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning.
24 Greg.

25
26 MR. RISDAHL: Hey, Jack. Good to hear
27 you.

28
29 MS. PILCHER: All right, And then, last
30 office of Subsistence management. Anyone online?

31
32 MR. GRAHAM: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
33 Members of the Council, this is Corey Graham, fisheries
34 biologist with OSM.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning,
37 Corey. And on that we need to know is there any DOI
38 people on this call? From the -- we've had DOI
39 participating-- listening in to these regional Council
40 meetings. Has anybody from DOI on this call? Washington,
41 D.C..

42
43 (no response)

44
45 Hearing none. So I think.....

46
47 MS. LA VINE: Excuse me. I'm sorry. I'm
48 so sorry. I wasn't able to unmute myself in time. Hello,
49 Jack. Mr. Chair, members of the Council, this is Robbin
50 La Vine. I am with the office of Subsistence management.

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1 Now within the Department of Interior. Well, as always,
2 thank you, Mr. Chair.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Good
5 morning, Robbin and so, you will be sitting in for DOI
6 then. Is that just -- you're just OSM not DOI? I've
7 encouraged DOI as we switched over to this, that they
8 participate in our meeting so that they -- because I
9 feel that its - gets a little -- gets them a little
10 closer to the issues, so. But I understand the transition
11 at this time. Do you have a question, Robert? Go ahead.

12

13 MR. WALKER: Yes. You said DOA?

14

15 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: DOI, Department of
16 Interior.

17

18 MR. WALKER: Oh okay.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So OSM is now under
21 the Department of Interior.

22

23 MR. WALKER: It's kinda [sic] like, you
24 know, using an acronym sometimes it kind of throws you
25 for what the attention was, Thank you.

26

27 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I'll try and
28 clarify next time, thank you. So, is anybody else on the
29 phone that's joining the call that hasn't identified
30 themselves?

31

32 MS. KENNER: Yes. This is Pippa Kenner
33 with the office of Subsistence management here in
34 Anchorage, good morning.

35

36 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning,
37 Pippa.

38

39 MR. MCKEE: Good morning, Jack. Good
40 morning, members of the Council. My name is Chris McKee.
41 Normally, I'm the statewide Subsistence coordinator for
42 the Bureau of Land Management but, for the next few
43 months, I'll be the acting deputy director at OSM, Thank
44 you.

45

46 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh okay, good to
47 hear you on there, Chris. Anybody else on the on the
48 call now that joined during the introductions?

49

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1 MS. MCDAVID: Good morning, Jack and
2 Council members. This is Brooke McDavid. I'm the
3 coordinator for Eastern Interior RAC. I'll be listening
4 in as I can today. Thanks.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning,
7 Brooke. And anybody else?

8
9 (no response)

10
11 So, hearing none, we have a room full
12 of people and so we'll start with Glen Stout in the
13 back. We'll work towards the front. Go ahead, Glenn. Oh
14 yeah, we got to get...

15
16 MS. PILCHER: So, this is for the record.
17 Sorry. Everybody's got to come up and talk into the mic,
18 unfortunately. Thanks, Glenn.

19
20 MR. STOUT: Glen Stout. Alaska Department
21 of Fish and Game, the Galena area biologist.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning,
24 Glenn.

25
26 MS. MORAN: Morning Council, this is Tina
27 Moran. I'm the deputy refuge manager for Kanuti National
28 Wildlife Refuge.

29
30 MS. FOX: Good morning, everybody. Joanna
31 Fox. I'm the refuge manager for Kanuti National Wildlife
32 Refuge.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Morning, Johanna.

35
36 MR. YASKA: Good morning. George Yaska,
37 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Indigenous Knowledge
38 Liaison, Thank you.

39
40 MR. HARWOOD: Good morning, Chris
41 Harwood, wildlife biologist for Kanuti Refuge.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning,
44 Chris.

45
46 MS. JALLEN: Good morning, Deena Jallen
47 with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The Yukon
48 River summer season. Fishery manager. Good to see
49 everybody.

50 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you.

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MR. OLSON: Good morning, Matt Olson. Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Normally the assistant fall season manager for the Yukon River, but, currently the acting manager, Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Acting fall season manager? Okay, Thank you.

MS. OKADA: Good morning. Marcy Okada Subsistence coordinator for Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Morning, Marcy.

MR. CAMERON: Good morning, Council members. My name is Matt Cameron, wildlife biologist with the National Park Service for Gates of the Arctic. Really nice to see you all.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Morning, Matt.

MR. RUNFOLA: Good morning. David Runfola. Alaska Department of Fish and Game. I'm the assistant management biologist for the Yukon summer season.

MR. WILLIAM: Good morning. Steve Williams, I'm the Oregon representative to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Listening with you this evening, Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning, Steve.

MR. WILLIAMS: Good morning.

MR. BEYERSDORF: Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Members of the Council, Geoff Beyersdorf. I'm with the Bureau of Land Management here. District manager for the (indiscernible) district, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Morning, Geoff.

MS. JULIANUS: Good morning, everybody. Erin Julianus I'm a wildlife biologist (distortion) Central Yukon field office.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're here.

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1 MR. MERRILL: Good morning, Clayton
2 Merrill. Subsistence Coordinator for Arctic Kanuti and
3 Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuges.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning,
6 Clayton.

7
8 MR. MARTIN: Good morning, I'm Ross
9 Martin. I'm a PhD student at the Yale School of the
10 Environment.

11
12 MR. PATSY: Good morning, good morning,
13 Doug Patsy from Nulato. Just a public participant.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning.

16
17 (Distortion)

18
19 MR. VICKERS: Oh, I thought the white was
20 on. Okay, red's on. Good morning members of the Council.
21 Mr. Chair, I'm Brent Vickers. I am the anthropology
22 division supervisor at Office of Subsistence Management.
23 I'll be representing (distortion) leadership team this
24 -- these next couple of days. Very excited to be here,
25 and I just want to make one point of little clarification
26 for vocabulary sake. So, we are -- OSM was moved within
27 the Office of Secretary within DOI. So, but no one from
28 the Office of Secretary seems to be on the phone just
29 letting you.....

30
31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, when we address
32 them, we're going to be addressing the office of the
33 secretary?

34
35 MR. VICKERS: I believe so, I mean, you
36 know, there's a -- we're within an Office of Secretary,
37 then there's a couple other little branches but, I think
38 Office of Secretary will suffice. And that's why I think
39 maybe Robbin got tripped up and she's like, well, I am
40 in DO. but anyway, yeah. That's all, Thank you.

41
42 MR. UBELAKER: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
43 Council members. Brian Ubelaker, wildlife biologist with
44 OSM.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning,
47 Brian.

48
49 MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning. Liz Williams
50 cultural anthropologist with OSM. Nice to see you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Morning, Liz. And
3 that's everybody in the room. Vince are you going to --
4 so we're getting the introductions and so, you're in the
5 room too, Vince go ahead.

6

7 MR. MATHEWS: Yeah, Vince Mathews.
8 Retired Federal employee.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And so, we're going
11 to -- let's see, where are we at here? Review and adopt
12 the agenda. So, the -- we have a -- an updated agenda
13 before us. This green colored agenda. And so, any
14 adjustments inclusions to this agenda? go ahead Nissa.

15

16 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa Pilcher for
17 the record. Just to let you guys know the difference
18 between the agenda that's in front of you and the agenda
19 that was in your meeting book is 1. We moved the agenda
20 item, WP 2401 statewide sale of brown bear hides from
21 under agenda item 15 other business to agenda item 12B
22 under action items, and under -- an addition under
23 reports we -- I added -- or it was added the Tanana
24 Chiefs Conference Tribal Resource Stewardship Department
25 and Kuskokwim River Inter Tribal Fish Commission joint
26 presentation on the chum bycatch EIS. And that is -- if
27 you guys accept it would be at a time certainly today
28 at 4 p.m. Also, there was the update from ADF&G
29 Subsistence division update and also a Unit 26A update
30 and this wasn't separated out correctly on the original
31 agenda. But Gates of the Arctic National Park Service
32 submitted a report and an SRC re-appointment request,
33 and the re-appointment request was not separated out
34 specifically on the original agenda. So those are the
35 differences between the one in the book and the one in
36 front of you now.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Nissa.
39 That clarifies the updated agenda. So, any comments on
40 this agenda? Any assertions from the Council? Do you
41 have anything? Tim Gervais? Are you still there, Tim?

42

43 MR. GERVIAS: Not at this time, Jack.

44

45 UNIDENTIFIED: I think he said "not at
46 this time."

47

48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you.
49 So, any additions from the Council members here? The
50 Chair will entertain a motion to adopt this agenda...

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MR. GERVIAS: Jack, can I interrupt?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: The -- yes, go ahead.

MR. GERVIAS: Yeah, I forgot to put in my opening comments but, maybe it could get added to the agenda. Could somebody from Department of Interior or Office of Secretary at some point during the meeting explain what's the likelihood of ANILCA title 8 or the OSM being amended or circumvented by presidential decree?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That's a sticky issue. You can -- we could request that -- we don't have anybody from the office of the Secretary of Interior on the phone. We could ask that of OSM when it comes to that point when we're discussing issues with OSM. Can -- does that fall under that agenda item Nissa?

MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa for the record. I mean, it could -- you could certainly ask the question whether that answer-- I mean, I'm not sure we'll be able to give you a satisfactory answer, but you can certainly ask the question. Okay.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Is that good, Tim?

MR. GERVIAS: Yes. That's good. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay so, the Chair will entertain a motion to adopt the agenda. That's nine green that's update before us.

MR. HONEA: Motion to adopt with the changes.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That's Don Honea.

MR. KRISKA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Tommy Kriska. Any further discussion? questions? All those in favor of adopting the agenda before us. Signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed?

2

3 (No response)

4

5 No -- and that was an affirmative for
6 Tim. Those opposed, same sign?

7

8 (No response)

9

10 (Distortion) is adopted. So, we're --
11 review and approve the previous minutes and those are
12 in our book here under what is that seven -- page seven.
13 So, I -- these minutes are fairly brief. I do -- there
14 is when we have public and tribal comments on non-agenda
15 items and Galena. Charlie Green talked to us, it's not
16 reflected in these minutes -- these draft minutes and
17 so I would like to insert, I forget exactly which order
18 he fell in. But Chief Green was before us, and we were
19 discussing trespass issues and other things with Chief
20 Green. And so, I feel that we have to recognize that as
21 something that was before us. Any other (distortion) on
22 the agenda -- or correction of these minutes of the
23 October -- what were they? The third, I think. October
24 two and three in Galena. That's the only addition that
25 I would like to see inserted. The Council is still
26 looking them over. Pollock is back for sure -- from a
27 short little absence, we're going over the minutes of
28 our last meeting down in Galena from -- that's on page
29 seven in your meeting book there, and we're moving
30 towards adopting these minutes. Pollock, if you want to
31 look on page seven. No, no, we're looking at our -- at
32 the minutes from the last meeting. We need to adopt
33 those minutes. So, you want to look at, on page seven
34 in your meeting book there.

35

36 UNIDENTIFIED: Pollock wasn't at that
37 meeting either.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: But -- so I want
40 (indiscernible). Council still looking the minutes over.
41 Don.

42

43 MR. HONEA: Wow, Thank you, Mr. Chair.
44 It is a -- it's a really good to be here present because
45 I had a hard time telephonically on there, and I wanted
46 to say some closing comments on the one in Galena. I'm
47 glad it turned out -- they were, I'm sure, a good host
48 and I just wanted to comment on the fishing issues and
49 stuff at that time, but I -- right now I'm just out to
50 the public. I wish anybody in TCC had any issues --

1 there was that meeting that we're having here tonight,
2 and it'd be great if the hunting and fishing Department
3 of TCC was here. Even right now, we -- there's plenty
4 of room available, but I just wanted to comment. It --
5 on the last day, my phone gave out, and I wasn't able
6 to do any closing comments, but, you know, in
7 consideration, it's really much easier to sit here and
8 discuss our problems and bring them up here to the
9 Council as a whole instead of trying to do that over the
10 phone. So, I wanted to -- you know, express some of the
11 concerns that were expressed in Galena on the hunting
12 issues and maybe in closing comments or something, I'll
13 bring it up again. But I just wanted to mention that my
14 -- in fact, I think Jenny brought it to the -- before
15 that, we should be compensated. At least buy us a doggone
16 phone, because I have one of these old flip top things
17 and I can barely hear out of it. So, it's really great
18 to -- for Nissa to bring us all in, in a timely manner,
19 Thank you.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Don.
22 There's going to be a chance for TCC to speak at 4:00
23 today on our agenda and I want to recognize this lady
24 that just came in. You want to come up to the mic here
25 and state for the record who you are? Because we're
26 keeping track of who's in the meeting.

27
28 MR. LAPP: Good morning and I apologize
29 for my lateness. A moose held me up in the dog yard this
30 morning. So, my name is Krystal Lapp, and I'm the natural
31 resource policy analyst for Tanana Chiefs Conference.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you. I -- you
34 bring up an important point for the Department of
35 Interior that these face-to-face meetings are integral
36 to this forum under title eight, section 805 of ANILCA.
37 The regional Council structure was set up and so, it's
38 a forum for public comment, it's a forum for interaction
39 of the Council to provide information and -- for the
40 Federal Subsistence Board process or the managing agency
41 processes. So, face-to-face meetings are very important
42 and if, you know, teleconferences with the phone systems
43 in rural Alaska, we have phones dropping galore in our
44 Galena meeting it was a big mess. And the Department of
45 Interior is going to have to understand that these in-
46 person meetings are really important. I don't care if
47 it's the advisory committee process for the Alaska
48 Department of Fish and Game or the Boards themselves,
49 Federal and state Boards, they need to be in person. So
50 that's an important thing and you bring that important

1 issue up I appreciate that, Don. So, these -- going back
2 to these minutes as any further additions, Don wanted
3 to say his phone dropped out and that should be included
4 that he had some closing comments, which is -- actually
5 should be registered on these minutes at the -- that's
6 before us. Any other comments? The Chair will entertain
7 a motion to adopt the minutes of our Galena meeting
8 October two and three with the additions.

9
10 MS. PELKOLA: Motion.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Motion by Jenny
13 Pelkola.

14
15 MR. HONEA: Second.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Don Honea, second.
18 Any further discussion? We have a question? Questions
19 called, those in favor of the minutes, as amended signify
20 by saying aye.

21
22 IN UNISON: Aye.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Those opposed same
25 sign.

26
27 (No response)

28
29 So, minutes are adopted from our last
30 meeting. Let's see, Council members' reports. And so, I
31 will start with Tim. He's on the phone and then we'll
32 move through our Council members' reports and then the
33 Chair's report is last. Go ahead Tim. You still there,
34 Tim?

35
36 MR. BEMBENIC: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair
37 and Council members, staff and attending public. The
38 first item in my report I wanted to cover was the Board
39 of Fish meeting that just recently concluded in
40 Southeast Alaska, where Board of Fish voted down on a
41 proposal to reduce hatchery production by 25%, and this
42 is a significant development because we've been talking
43 for a few years now about how a high level hatchery
44 leases from Alaska and from other countries in the
45 Pacific rim are depleting the food supply for all salmon
46 in the marine environment and it's tallying or
47 disturbing from my point of view that The Board of Fish
48 would not take a more conservation style approach to
49 this proposal. So, something that we just need to keep
50 track of and understand that one of the main issues that

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1 the WIRAC has brought up is affecting viability of salmon
2 and the marine environment is -- it's not getting
3 traction on the Board of Fish. Throughout the -- with
4 the Board of Fish process the main adversaries to that
5 proposal being passed was commercial fishermen and to
6 some extent, the Department of Fish and Game was not in
7 favor of that proposal. The second item is if any time
8 during the course of this meeting, if anybody with Alaska
9 Department of Fish and Game could explain if they know
10 that if the Chinook Salmon Research Initiative, which
11 was started around 2014, is still in play, or if that
12 project has been defunded? At the time it was supposed
13 to be a significant research project where certain
14 initiatives are going to be taking place to try to define
15 better what's going on with chinook salmon and one of
16 them was genetic testing from many of the different
17 locations around the state and we just never saw hardly
18 any feedback or scientific information come out of that
19 Chinook Salmon Research Initiative. The third item, with
20 the change of administration in Washington, there's a
21 few new players -- or not, I guess I shouldn't say
22 players. New secretaries that are going to affect our
23 interaction as Secretary of Commerce and Secretary of
24 Interior. So new Secretary of Commerce is Howard Lutnick
25 from New York City. He's involved with hedge funds and
26 Wall Street culture, and he doesn't really have, that I
27 know of, any experience in marine fisheries.

28
29 So, I know we were -- as a Council, we
30 were trying to get more` interaction and potentially
31 like a memorandum of understanding between the Secretary
32 of Interior and Secretary of Commerce regarding chinook
33 salmon protection and with this newly appointed
34 Secretary of Commerce just based on his work history,
35 career history, he just doesn't have much background
36 with fisheries. So, the extent we'll be able to make
37 inroads into getting any kind of -- get it -- getting
38 increased understanding of problems where we're dealing
39 with our chinook salmon and chum issues may be limited.
40 And then the second secretary, Secretary of Interior
41 Doug Burgum, he grew up in North Dakota. His family was
42 involved with farming, but, during his working career
43 he's been mostly involved with real estate, software
44 development and venture capital and I don't have very
45 much more information about Mr. -- Secretary Burgum. And
46 then, the final item was I'm wondering with the -- with
47 this present administration -- presidential
48 administration, I'm wondering what effect regarding
49 ANILCA Title VIII and the Subsistence program. How --
50 if by presidential decree, if the intent or the funding

1 of the program, could potentially be affected. That's
2 all I have for this morning.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Tim.
5 It's my understanding that the House and the Senate hold
6 the purse strings and so, the funding is in their court.
7 And so, I -- that's constitutional. So, I have high
8 hopes for our U.S. government -- I took U.S. government
9 in school, and it works certain ways. And I mean the
10 president can decrease staff, but that doesn't mean it's
11 going to hold up in court. So, I have high, high hopes
12 for our check and balance system. And so, I don't -- I
13 do know that, you know, OSM's spending was frozen
14 yesterday and I'm a little concerned about that. That's
15 like stuff that should not happen -- not funding that's
16 already been appropriated. That's not the way this is
17 supposed to work. But that'll sort out, I think it'll
18 sort out over time. So, thank you for your comments, Tim
19 and -- so, we're going to start with Tommy over here.
20 We're going to move around the room. Go ahead, Tommy.
21 You got a good list here. You save them up and Tommy's
22 got his hand on the pulse of the land. So, we're
23 interested in what Tommy's got to say about what's
24 happening. Go ahead, Tommy.

25

26 MR. KRISKA: Well, okay, I -- you know,
27 for me, I do a lot of writing when I'm alone and take
28 notes, but I've been taking notes for, like, 35 years,
29 since 1990, when we -- the Yukon Drainage Fisheries
30 Association was formed and thought we were going to get
31 into something and change things. But here we are 35
32 years later, sitting here in in a worst situation back
33 then, we had smart, strong older guys that were great
34 leaders and good inspiration, and they hollered, they
35 swore they did everything to try to change things. But
36 other people had to feed the -- I don't know, the whole
37 United States and everybody else and not worried about
38 any of these issues that were talked about then and it
39 still be -- and today we're still in the same boat --
40 in the worst boat. We don't even know what a salmon
41 looked like. It might -- government or one of those guys
42 might have to start sending us pictures or whatever
43 because it's been seven years now, and I know -- I'm
44 kind of sad because we have people that are, you know,
45 in these departments from Northern Pacific, the
46 Department of wherever you're coming from and being back
47 in those meetings back in those days and still nothing
48 is done. Nothing ever will be done. Might as well just
49 take that to heart because it's sad, it's really sad
50 that I have to look at my grandchildren and like, you

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1 know what? to hell with the damn government and all
2 those guys, they're just going to keep on doing what
3 they're doing, and we're never going to ever get
4 anywhere. They're never going to see a fish and I try
5 to -- I usually write everything. All I wrote was
6 fishing, hunting and hatcheries and the ocean and they
7 changed their names and do all this kind of cool stuff
8 to be who they are. They have their bread and butter in
9 order to, you know, for their families to live on. But
10 you guys took our -- some of our ways and taken more of
11 it, too. It's got into the fish now. It's getting into
12 our moose and our country, our land, everything. So sorry
13 to have to talk like this, but it's the damn truth and
14 I wake up -- I mean, I been straight for 40 years and
15 wake up in the morning and think this is going to get
16 worse today. Think of the best thing you can do for your
17 family today. Now, we don't have no, Fred Meyers or
18 Costco or anything around us. We don't have anything.
19 We have a bunch of you know -- I just no offense, but
20 you know, I always thought of all the people in the in
21 the crowd and the people who are listening, people who
22 are recording you and what they do with that information?
23 We're going to meet with somebody else tonight. Maybe,
24 I don't know, they're getting all booked up and see what
25 we have to say today and get into their defense tonight.
26 I don't know where this information goes or how it's
27 dealt with or whatever, but I found out something in the
28 last past few years that a lot of our tribes, they go
29 directly to DC because they want to figure out what's
30 going on. And these tribes go to DC, and they ask these
31 questions and the government President Norman Baxter
32 saying, we never got that information. We -- where is
33 it? We - well what -- all we go to the Board of Fish,
34 Northern Pacific, Board of Game. All that information
35 comes here but, then you have Board of Fish, Board of
36 Game, Northern Pacific trawlers fishery industry and
37 then you have the government over here. I don't think
38 this information -- it hits right here and it's like a
39 screen, its thrown out, thrown away because it never
40 gets to where it needs to be. I'm kind of fed up with
41 it. That's why I was going to write up some things about
42 what's going on out there but I think what I was doing
43 was giving the information, what's going out there and
44 then better and these guys attitudes and their whatever-
45 - put another dollar in the pocket or whatever I'm -- I
46 don't know I'm confused and my people are paying for it
47 throughout the whole state of Alaska. Alaska is the third
48 -- one third you know, biggest United States. Three
49 Alaska fits in the United States but we're a forgotten
50 state. We're forgotten people. They want the minerals.

1 They want the whatever they can -- you know, they're
2 trying to get this Ambler Road going through there.
3 They're working for development, and the development is
4 money, and the fishing is money, and they're going to
5 fish that fish to the end, and they're going to starve
6 themselves out and finally realize what was going on but
7 it's going to be too late for their own selves, and it's
8 going to be -- and it's already pretty much too late for
9 all of us here. I mean, I think I'm going to die like
10 this, I guess maybe in a worse situation. But it's sad
11 to see that the government and the U.S., you know, they
12 say live free. Yeah, that's for some people. Not us up
13 here in Alaska. But I could go on and on and all this
14 stuff. I mean, I quit talking about the moose and what's
15 out there, all this stuff. Because if I mention it,
16 it'll probably be used against me in another way. So,
17 I'm just going to leave what's out there and protect it
18 physically myself, I guess, for around our area and I
19 hope everybody else will do the same. And like -- just
20 other folks, you know, I hope Doyon was here, TCC and
21 maybe a rep from each one of our AC Councils and it's
22 kind of hard to do because it's a -- this is serious.
23 We're in a serious situation and like I said before, no
24 offense to a lot of you out there, but, you know, I feel
25 like some things entering my back here in some way, the
26 sorry to say that. But I have to say it because when I
27 go home, I don't know what's going to happen with --
28 going on in the future unless I don't know. I don't know
29 what's going to -- I don't think anything is ever going
30 to be done. It's going to get worst, worst, worst [sic]
31 and until maybe be better, we just run out of everything
32 now so that we will figure out what to do, and they can
33 help us and figure out what we could do. So anyway, I
34 could go on and on. So, I just want to thank the Board
35 for being here and, you know, giving it all our -- trying
36 everything we can. So, I'll leave it at that and thank
37 you for that.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Appreciate those
40 comments, Tommy, I think everybody feels the same way.
41 I mean, we make all these comments to the Board of Fish,
42 you know, all these various North Pacific Fisheries
43 management. It's like it gets it goes into a sound,
44 deadened room. They don't hear what we're saying, don't
45 want to hear it and so, it gets frustrating. But we just
46 got to keep trying. That's -- I've been doing this for
47 30 something years just like you and I -- you just got
48 to keep -- I mean, it's like you're breaking trail in
49 deep snow. You keep getting stuck over and over, but you
50 got to just keep going. You got to sit there and die.

1 You got to keep going. So, I appreciate your comments.
2 Pollock.

3
4 MR. SIMON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My name
5 is Pollock Simon Sr. I live in Aztec at Upper Koyukuk
6 River and there hasn't been any fish for the last several
7 years. First years we were restricted to taking king
8 salmon and chum salmon population also crash [sic] and
9 we're not fishing for anything now. That makes life kind
10 of tough. But where I live upper Koyukuk River there's
11 caribou hasn't returned for many years and there no
12 population of moose and the black bears has disappeared,
13 and life is kind of tough. With the new president, the
14 new administration -- not so much free money would be
15 available so it's going to get tougher yet. But
16 (indiscernible) about salmon. (Indiscernible) kitchen
17 timer set for 1940 there was no fish (indiscernible)
18 and- but, in five years 1945, it improved. So, there
19 were some lean years but, the elders or -- our elders
20 has always told us to respect the animals and the fish,
21 and we did that. Yeah, when salmon coming up, we go to
22 fish camp and take what we need and that's what the
23 elders wanted us to do and that worked good. Then there
24 was (indiscernible) and then of course, the state
25 therefore mentioned the fish with (distortion) the fish
26 and then, there's no more salmon. But we all work, we
27 all try to bring the salmon back. I believe personally
28 that the wild salmon stock is a better fish than the
29 hatchery fish. Sometimes you talk about putting in the
30 hatchery into this river, which could release a million
31 fish but these fish up to our ears but that wouldn't be
32 the answer either. Maybe, we prefer to eat the wild
33 stock salmon. I'm a little bit concerned about the non-
34 salmon species like sheefish and whitefish. If there's
35 no king salmon, no chum salmon, then we depend on these
36 for the success, and we want to fish too much on the
37 whitefish and sheefish. We have to be careful that if
38 this whitefish and sheefish (indiscernible) we left the
39 rest of the country no fish. I'm glad I came back here,
40 I missed a couple of years of meetings, but I'm glad
41 that Jack Reakoff and Jenny still send after the officers
42 running the meeting. But I'm glad to see all of you.
43 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you,
46 Pollock. We appreciate you. They got you tuned up, you're
47 looking great, and I always enjoy your comments and your
48 input. You know, we had the marine systems have crashed
49 in other years. In 1919, the fish came back so bad that
50 people had to kill all of their dogs in the interior of

1 Alaska and Hudson Stack, who built the Episcopal mission
2 in Allakaket, had to go to Congress to get Congress --
3 because it was a territory -- to close the canneries at
4 the mouth of the Yukon River that were wiping out all
5 the remaining fish. The fish came back. The fish came
6 back because there were no trawl fisheries and there
7 were no hatchery fish being dumped out by 1.9 billion
8 fish smolt into the North Pacific, into a marine crash.
9 And those -- and the salmon returned fairly quickly once
10 they went back to protection of the spawning returns.
11 The problem we have right now is warmer water, we have
12 a marine crash in the North Pacific Gulf of Alaska, and
13 they just keep -- they don't stop dumping the smolt and
14 the fish are competing with the wild fish. They take the
15 food right out of the wild fish's mouth. And so, I'm
16 getting really concerned that the Board of Fish did not
17 see the handwriting on the wall. All the fish are getting
18 smaller and smaller. They're really skinny, all these
19 sockeye that they bring back to the -- they send them
20 out by TCC People: like, "I don't like these fish,
21 they're too skinny". Yeah. Even the sockeye are really
22 skinny. Sockeye aren't supposed to be that thin. Their
23 spawning viability of the sockeye and the salmon that
24 are actually going to get into the river -- or actually
25 I don't know if they're really viable stock, their egg
26 loads and stuff. I don't know their survivability. The
27 eggs could be not nearly what they should be. So, this
28 -- it's a -- you know, Pollock remembers the stories of
29 those salmon crashes and the stories -- and I remember
30 people have told me about -- you know, Sydney and those
31 people told me about these -- those days. Those were the
32 bad old days. And so, we -- I'm glad you brought that
33 up, Pollock about these -- you know there's been crashes,
34 but it's a different landscape now. We're still
35 overtaxing the oceans. So that was a good point.
36 Appreciate that, Pollock. Jenny.

37
38 MS. PELKOLA: Good morning, everyone. I'm
39 Jenny Pelkola, living in Galena. I'm originally from
40 Koyukuk, but I live in Galena now. Very good, Tommy and
41 it's good to see you back. Like you say, you've been
42 gone for two years, Pollock and I'm glad you're back.
43 And you're -- like Jack said, you're looking younger and
44 good to see Don back. I'm always pushing for having our
45 members present and I know it's -- one day we'll all be
46 -- all of us will be setting up here, but I don't -- I
47 still don't understand why we have two vacant seats. I
48 think we need to work harder and get those filled,
49 because the more members we have up here, you know, we
50 learn from each other. I wasn't going to run again on

1 this last one, but I was talked into it again. And I
2 keep saying this, it's going to be my last time, but I
3 learned a lot from these younger folks and our elder.
4 So, I enjoy just meeting with the guys, and I'm always
5 pushing for women -- more women on the Board but as you
6 can see, it's hard to get, I guess. But there's a lot
7 of women out there that I know can also be sitting up
8 here. I had an opportunity to go to a training in Galena
9 for -- to understand that North Pacific Fisheries a
10 little bit more and thanks to TCC And Krystal was there.
11 Thank you, Krystal. That was very enjoyable. And I wish
12 more tribes would take the opportunity to try to learn
13 a little bit more about the North Pacific Fisheries and
14 from that, I got an opportunity to go to Anchorage to
15 testify along with folks from all over Alaska. And I
16 don't know if we did anything, but they listened to some
17 of -- they listened because one of the members came up
18 to me later and thanked me for what I had to say and --
19 so maybe I don't know. But, anyway, we're going to meet
20 with them tonight, and hopefully they put on their
21 listening ears. We've had a lot of snow in our area in
22 Galena, and I know the wolves are out there doing their
23 thing, and -- but we have -- thank God we have men that
24 -- and women that go out and look for the wolves that
25 are doing their things and some of them are having
26 success. So, I just thank the guys that can, you know,
27 go out in the cold and do that -- still do that for --
28 to keep the moose population up. I enjoy sitting on this
29 Board, like I said, and it's good to see all your faces
30 out there. Sometimes we have -- all the Chairs are filled
31 and sometimes they're not. But I hear there's a lot of
32 people online, which is good. I see new faces, and I see
33 faces from the past that I've known. Good to see you,
34 Vince and obviously oh -- thank you for the honey, gee.

35
36 CHAWIRPERSON REAKOFF: That's.....

37
38 MS. PELKOLA: I forgot your name.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Jeff.

41
42 MS. PELKOLA: Oh, Jeff. Thank you, Jeff,
43 for the honey and we all got -- we must be sweet or
44 something so, thank you. But, with that, I'll just end
45 my Comments. Thank you.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Jenny.
48 Appreciate that. And Robert.
49

1 MR. WALKER: How come you skipped
2 yourself, Jack? I mean.....

3
4 MS. PELKOLA: He's last.

5
6 MR. WALKER: Oh, thank you, Mr. Chair,
7 for giving me this opportunity to speak. Members of the
8 Board, Nissa and our coordinator. And I'd like to give
9 a big, warm welcome to our former warden, who gave us a
10 lot of inspiration back in the day when we were a lot
11 younger.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: He's referring to
14 Vince Mathews in the audience.

15
16 MR. WALKER: Thank you.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: He used to be the
19 coordinator for this Council.

20
21 MR. WALKER: And, you know, Mister
22 Beyersdorf was working with us for years with BLM and
23 part of 21E there -- it's called Lower Yukon subregion
24 in the TCC area with tagging moose and having the
25 students in the classroom following on their computers,
26 which was very inspirational to them. Something learned
27 that they will never forget. Even at this age, we never
28 had that done ever again. Thank you again, Geoff, for
29 doing that. And thank you all the Board members and all
30 the staff here for all the work they've done. I know
31 it's a turmoiled time just listening and watching the
32 news, talking with staff members on what's going on, but
33 I don't know if it's for better or for worse. Sounds
34 like a marriage to me, but, I don't know. We'll find out
35 what happens in the end, but I hope everything turns out
36 right and our Board, Western Interior, how long are we
37 going to be able to function with this also, in the
38 Eastern Interior and all the other interiors that have
39 to work with this. And I just want to say one thing, we
40 testified, like where Jenny was a week ago with the
41 inter-tribal (indiscernible) and the fish Commission
42 from Bering Sea, and it went on for seven days
43 testifying. Every three minutes there was somebody up
44 testifying. It didn't matter who you were, you were from
45 the interior, the coast, southeast, Aleutian chain,
46 whatever. But I watched the people who sat at that desk
47 up and watched, a lot of them didn't really pay attention
48 to what people were saying because they heard it over
49 and over and over again. I don't know, but some of them
50 did pay attention and John Moller was there. I've known

1 him for a long time, and he paid attention because he's
2 from the Aleutian chain, and he knew what we were -- or
3 what was going on our way of living our lives so far.
4 But one thing when I testified, they gave me six minutes
5 and I did talk for our tribes, I did talk for an animal
6 because nobody ever speaks for them. They are being
7 mercilessly killed for starving because there's no fish.
8 We shot so many bears in our area, it's not funny, then
9 to open them up and see they have no fat on them because
10 they're coming down to our village eating dogs and
11 killing all the moose, calves in our area, which is
12 really something that [sic] hard to see in the last five
13 years. There used to be 120 moose on the island and now
14 there's only 10. I mean, we don't hunt in our -- right
15 around town so, you know that if you kill 30 bears within
16 five miles of Anvik or Grayling, they're out there eating
17 and hunting moose. So that's a new trait for them. It's
18 not really in Anvik, but it's all through the Yukon
19 Valley from Fairbanks all the way down. And I find this
20 really irresponsible because this never should have
21 happened. Talking with the fish Commissioner, Doug Lang
22 and I explained that to him and he says, no, I have to
23 follow to what the governor has told me to do and the
24 Fish Board and now, Mr. Walker, what we're going to have
25 to do we're going to have to put a seven moratorium on
26 fishing on the Yukon River and I asked him why. He said,
27 well, this is the spawning ground and I said, are you
28 for real? He says, I have to follow orders like everybody
29 else and I said, well, what about Bering Sea? Why don't
30 anybody do anything about putting a seven-year
31 moratorium on the Bering Sea? and he says, you have no
32 jurisdiction and walked away. I kind of felt a little
33 irritable, because I think if we're going to have to
34 bear the burden for food. The Bering Sea fishermen should
35 bear the burden of having no money. But you know money
36 is going to win because it's a billion fishery. We see
37 it, you know it all too, but you're not going to speak
38 up. Because when I do talk to people, it's like something
39 that-- afraid to speak that you might be heard by
40 somebody else or something. But I am a tribal chief
41 also. So, I have to speak for all our tribes as it goes
42 and being back on the west Interior RAC, I was hoping
43 that we could all work with our government and the
44 Federal government on this issue, but it seems like we're
45 split so many different ways that we're never, ever going
46 to be together to finalize this. Now we have another
47 burden that has come to all of our departments and our
48 own on how the door is going to be functioning and
49 working to -- what government efficiency is, is going
50 to be something else for us too. it's going to fall

1 right down on the bottom of us. CDQ is part of a federal
2 monies and state monies. I don't know what's going to
3 happen there, but they are in a better position than we
4 are in the interior because they have monies, and they
5 have fisheries. We don't have anything, and we're just
6 going to have to tighten our belt and try to figure out
7 how we're going to use that front door to get to places
8 or is there a back door somebody can show us on how to
9 go out there and to work at this. I'm afraid to say that
10 our young people are learning how to steal from the
11 government, going out and taking salmon and passing it
12 out to the elders. This is something that -- what I
13 hoped I didn't want to have to see, but it is coming to
14 that, and you can't blame them, they're hungry too. So,
15 Mr. Chairman, I will leave it at that. I know we're all
16 in the same boat together here. So how are we going to
17 row it forward and backward? How are we going to do
18 this? Split the boat in half. I know there's no happy
19 ending to this one. It might not be in my lifetime
20 anyway. So, Mr. Chair, thank you. Members of the staff,
21 Thank you. Members of the Board, Thank you.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Robert.
24 I appreciate all your comments and yeah, like a lot of
25 people -- subsistence people don't know what's going to
26 happen, not just with the government. We just don't know
27 what's going to happen with the way the climate is and
28 how the populations of fish and wildlife are going. We
29 just don't know. It's getting like, really concerning
30 about what are we going to do if stuff just goes
31 completely down to nothing? There's lots of snowshoe
32 hares, and I know that elders told me that when they had
33 salmon crashes in the -- long time ago, they had to eat
34 snowshoe hares and muskrats was there -- a large food
35 source. Those were tough days. There were no moose. It
36 was bad times. So, we might be looking at that. Hopefully
37 not and so, Don -- appreciate your comments. Don, go
38 ahead.

39
40 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's
41 good to be back on the Board, but I -- it's kind of odd
42 the way it fell into place so, I'm just filling the seat
43 till 2025, which is right now. So, I just got back on,
44 and I got a refile. I guess that's the process, but,
45 hey, I -- it's interesting listening to the comments and
46 I appreciate the Board as a whole. I -- it's always been
47 my concern-- is still my concern. Why don't TCC? Why
48 don't we? Why don't somebody [sic] that can get reps
49 from out of McGrath, Red Devil, Aniak? We should be
50 striving for that. You know, I've always been told, hey,

1 you can know -- you're only speaking of your -- from
2 your subregion or your village, your refuge. Well, of
3 course, I mean, I don't know what's going on. I don't
4 know what's going on in Kaltag or Huslia or something
5 like that. That's why I just deem it important. We have
6 people like Pollock, with wisdom coming from over there,
7 and my cousin Jenny, I appreciate her comments and all
8 of you, Robert and Tommy. Those of you who don't know
9 that guy is a go getter. He goes out and he gets wolves
10 and stuff like that. I wish I could be the same way, do
11 the same thing, you know, we all have gifts of some
12 sort, but, I just -- I -- I'm kind of really unclear as
13 to whether I gave a report on the numbers of moose on
14 the Novi this fall, but, I just hear there's a large
15 wolf population between Ruby and Galena, maybe around
16 Bible camp or maybe around Novi, on the south of the
17 Nowitna River there hasn't been a -- those people up
18 there for maybe three years now, a couple of years at
19 least and so, there's actually nobody up there. We have
20 a cabin at the Marten River on a Native allotment, but
21 I haven't been able to get up there. I did have a couple
22 of friends from TCC staff that went -- I let them go
23 down there, and they used the cabin about this time of
24 the year. They traveled by Snowmachine, and they were
25 able to take some. So, I think anything that we could
26 do to strive to keep our population -- our moose and
27 just one other thing I wanted to mention you know, when
28 we talk about fish, dang, there's a myriad of things
29 that are happening and so I'm -- you know, I guess maybe
30 this could be posed in North Pacific, but, how much is
31 that bycatch really taking a toll? I mean, okay, we
32 crashed. We -- I mean, you know, like a friend of mine
33 years ago when we were in Galena or somewhere we
34 mentioned that, hey, we could always rely on the summer
35 chum, the fall chum and to this day, we can't. That's
36 really distressful and, you know, we didn't care about
37 the king run. Hey, we could pour -- we'll just let that
38 go. but, since then, you know -- and so how much, how
39 much bycatch of chum -- I'm more concerned about the
40 bigger picture, like Area M. Okay, if they say, well,
41 those fish, they were targeted for the -- maybe the West
42 Coast, not the Yukon and the Kuskokwim, but, I don't
43 know, you know, are they tagging them? How do we -- how
44 do they actually know where they go? So, there's a lot
45 of lot of questions and I haven't been keeping up with
46 the Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. I missed a couple of
47 meetings there, but I just -- I'm kind of anxious to see
48 what the forecast is for this year. Other than that,
49 it's good to be here, and I appreciate each one of you
50 guys for your comments and your concerns, Thank you.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks, Don. I want
3 to find out if Darrell Vent has come back onto the phone
4 or did you ever get on Darrel? So, I would like a Council
5 member report from Darrel and so, it's the Chair's
6 report. I'm on the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence
7 Resource Commission. We had a meeting in November. We
8 talked quite a bit about dall sheep and caribou
9 populations. That's a -- kind of a thing in the mountains
10 is the dall sheep population and the status of that. We
11 had a presentation from the Alaska Department of Fish
12 and Game. They have GPS collars on ewes and rams in the
13 park and then east over to the outside of the park. And
14 so that's a multi-year study of the dall sheep
15 population. They had some mortalities. They flew and
16 found that wolverines had killed one of the dall sheep,
17 and one died from pneumonia, and they had a necropsy.
18 So, we're learning stuff about the dall sheep from that
19 project. I have high hopes for that project and so, that
20 -- I wanted to bring that before this Council, because
21 this Council is also concerned about the dall sheep
22 population in the Brooks Range. We -- we've had a
23 considerably different winter than most people are
24 experiencing the rest of Alaska. The Brooks Range has
25 received a lot of snow when it's raining, and in
26 Anchorage it's raining, in Fairbanks, it was snowing and
27 snowing we had 51 inches of snow that fell in Wiseman
28 in January alone. We've had 90 -- over 91 inches of snow
29 this year. I take weather for the National Weather
30 Service. We had an apex of snowpack at 52 inches. It
31 rained in January 18th on that snow and melted for nine
32 hours. It made a crust in the snow. The moose were to
33 their belly and snow. We've got good strong stock. We've
34 got big moose that have survived 2018, 19, 20. And so
35 we had a cool summer, and our moose camp seem to be
36 still surviving this. There was blood on the snow.
37 There's where they rake themselves up in those cross and
38 the calves are getting cut up a little bit. The snow is
39 really deep in the mountains, and it only rained on the
40 valley floor fortunately, I didn't find crust in higher
41 elevations. I'm trapping higher -- wolves at higher
42 elevations. I didn't find crust when the -- there was
43 deep snow for basically three weeks, and the sheep had
44 a real hard time with that, and so did the caribou. We
45 have -- I think they're Teshekpuk Caribou to the west
46 of us and the wind blew really hard about a week ago,
47 ten days ago. Rip the snow right off the mountains. So
48 now the caribou are way up. They've gone higher on the
49 ridges. The wolves that we've caught are really fat.
50 That's because they -- they've had quite a bit of snow.

1 They got the advantage on the moose, and they got the
2 advantage on the Caribou. So, we're working on this wolf
3 thing, you know you can ask Glenn back there. Basically,
4 one wolf is worth 7 to 12 moose -- when you say that,
5 Glenn? something like that. 7 to 12 moose you catch a
6 few wolves you take away; it makes credits for the human
7 harvest. So, it's like a teeter totter. You have to take
8 moose, caribou and sheep on this side. You got to take
9 predators off the other side, and we take bears also.
10 If we can get a bear, usually in -- someone in our
11 community will get a bear and -- at some point, and a
12 lot of the bears that we -- have brown bears, they need
13 vegetation in the fall. They want to fatten up on eating
14 roots and stuff. So, they're really good eating bears,
15 even if they eat moose calves in the spring. So, we do
16 catch bears. So, one of the elders or person that I knew
17 a long time ago said that if you catch a moose or a
18 caribou, it's your obligation to take a wolf or a bear.
19 And so that's what everybody, you know, if you're out
20 moose hunting and you see a bear, take it. If you see a
21 wolf, take it. And so, Tommy's -- at one point he told
22 me how many wolves he got, and I calculated it was around
23 1100 moose savings and about a 3- or 4-year period. So,
24 Tommy is making all of the -- pretty much all of the
25 harvest and people around in that area. The harvest of
26 the local people there. Of all the communities in your
27 central Yukon area, you're saving the moose that are
28 going back into the human consumption. This is part of
29 the rural methods is to take predators, everything, not
30 just go get a moose in the fall and go home and watch
31 football all winter. You're out there beating yourself
32 up. Theres -- two weeks ago, I was in snow breaking
33 trail in my Muskeg on Willow or something, and I'd sink
34 to my chest stuck. That's never fun, but we got to keep
35 -- that's what I keep -- I use that as an analogy. So,
36 our winter is really hard, but our game is healthier and
37 so, our sheep population was starting to come up. We
38 showed 41 lambs per 100 ewes. There's hardly any ewes,
39 but I mean there's 41 per 100 ewes. And so, they're good
40 strong stock. And so, they're also -- they had a rainy
41 summer and rainy summers -- when they don't get caribou
42 and sheep surveys are actually extend [sic] the blossom
43 periods for the flowers and the sheep and the caribou
44 benefit highly from rainy summers and the insect
45 numbers. Kanuti gave us a report last fall that the
46 bumblebees were down to about 90%. Well, that's across
47 the board. There's not -- there's ants pollinating
48 insects are not there. I don't know what in the world
49 that's about. There weren't even a lot of mosquitoes
50 last summer. So, these things affect the birds, you know,

1 the grouse and so forth. The bird flu is decimated the
2 wild raven population. I drove the Haul Road down. There
3 are hundreds of ptarmigan from north of the Yukon River
4 all the way to the south slope of the Brooks River.
5 Literally thousands. They're getting run over by trucks.
6 If the ravens are in the country, they're going to eat
7 those carcasses. I only send -- seen ten ravens between
8 Fairbanks and lives, call it Livengood in the Brooks
9 Range. Raven populations they've been killed off by bird
10 flu. Hawks and -- you know, on the Yukon River peregrine
11 falcons have gone way down so, the number of predators
12 are down. So, grouse and ptarmigan are doing really,
13 really well. There is lots of ptarmigan so, those are -
14 - and the snowshoe hare population is low but, stable.
15 The Lynx we're catching are fat and so, the Lynx --
16 Riverbank Lynx with kittens moving in back into the
17 Brooks Range right now. And I caught two kitties just
18 about a week or so ago and they're pretty good sized and
19 they have fat on them. So, if you got a kitten with fat
20 on it, that shows that the habitat is really good for
21 them. So, I am -- I'm really concerned about these salmon
22 stocks. I -- I'm concerned that we're not going to ever
23 get them back, when the Board of fish just puts their
24 head in the sand and re-allocates all of the resource -
25 - all of the food resource, the trophic of the North
26 Pacific to the hatchery fish, wild stocks are going to
27 continue to decline. We cannot come back unless they get
28 it through their head, their studies -- I'm reading a
29 study from Washington State University in British
30 Columbia about hatchery influence. 1.2 billion pink and
31 chum salmon smolts are having a giant effect on wild
32 chinook, coho and wild chum. That's what's beating us
33 up and so, I don't know that bycatch of the returning
34 few that are coming back is a problem. But the main
35 problem is hatcheries. The big -- the elephant in the
36 room is the hatchery release. Washington state -- here's
37 what Washington state releases 200 million pink salmon
38 and one year on the high year and then they don't release
39 the next year because pink salmon have an alternate year.
40 The state of Alaska allows hatcheries to release every
41 year, millions. It's a problem, there's no science
42 involved in the hatcheries in Alaska, and I'm highly
43 annoyed with the Board of Fish for not addressing the
44 issue. A 25% decline -- reduction in hatchery release
45 would not -- it would help -- it's not going to fix the
46 problem. Their hatcheries were not even getting enough
47 returns so that they could even row strip their own
48 fish. They're affecting their own returns. The hatchery
49 -- hatcheries are owned by the Aquaculture Association,
50 which is the seining industry and there's people that

1 work for the hatcheries, and that's the main obstacle.
2 They're going to cut off all those jobs. Well, there's
3 too many hatcheries. They're industrial hatcheries. They
4 need get it through their head. They need to stop the
5 hatchery production. I'm not opposed to raising chinook
6 and dumping those in the harbors of Juneau and people
7 catch these fish, some coho and chinook I'm talking about
8 in pink salmon industrial millions, hundreds of
9 millions, 750 million pink salmon release. That is way
10 too much fish. Our chinook stocks move into the marine
11 system. The pinks are there to eat the fish in front of
12 them and so, it's a giant problem. We do need to talk
13 about this as the few chums that survive -- some of the
14 stocks -- and Don touched on that, there's no genetic
15 work done to a large degree of Area M. What chum salmon
16 stocks are going where? They just basically want to put
17 their heads in the sand. They don't even want to talk
18 about the chums moving through Aea M. Those are the
19 survivors; there's like huge mortalities of our wild
20 chums so the few survivors need to be protected. We need
21 to talk about the North Pacific Fisheries Management
22 Councils there. There's going to give us various options
23 and I encourage your Council to be prompt at 6:30 for
24 that meeting tonight. This is going to be a big part of
25 this meeting. Is this North Pacific Fisheries Management
26 Council. So that's my report and Tommy has a question
27 or comment. Go ahead, Tommy.

28
29 MR. KRISKA: Okay so, I see that, you
30 know, the -- all these hatcheries are a big issue with
31 our, you know, our fish. So, you know, why is it that
32 all the hatcheries are along the coast of Alaska? Why,
33 if they all belong to the government or the Northern
34 Pacific fisheries, why don't they move back down to the
35 middle of the United States, down there, away from the
36 -- our Yukon River? Why can't they have their fisheries
37 hatcheries down there instead of right on the mouth of
38 our river?

39
40 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: These are Alaskan
41 hatcheries. We're the problem. We've got to look in the
42 mirror. Alaska is the problem. We're the largest release
43 of hatchery of fish into the North Pacific and North
44 America. Yeah, they release fish down in the Washington,
45 Oregon, Northern California. Nothing like the Alaskan
46 release and they don't release pink salmon at this level.
47 Everybody knows that anybody that knows anything about
48 pink salmon, they're voracious. They grow to full
49 maturity in two years. They eat everything in front of
50 them. They eat all the plankton, and then they start

1 moving into small fish and a lot of our -- the second
2 year pinks are wiped. I'm sure they're eating a lot of
3 our chum and our chinook because there's so many. They
4 ate all of our smolt that are moving into the ocean.
5 They can't. They - there are just too many pinks in the
6 ocean. They're not supposed to be like that. Yeah, and
7 then they'll say, well, there's lots of hatchery lakes
8 over in Asia. But, Asian stocks, they don't go -- they
9 move into the North Pacific, but they're more to the
10 West. They're not so far into our fish. A lot of our
11 fish out of the Yukon move into the North Pacific. The
12 Japan currents running along the south Alaska coast and
13 our stocks of salmon go along the southern part of
14 Alaska. They're moving all the way and they're right in
15 among all that pinks. And so, they're our wild fish that
16 we got by the time they get to the North Pacific, the
17 pinks have beaten them, and the pinks move all the way
18 in, and our pinks move up halfway into the North Pacific.
19 So, it's a -- the hatchery is the elephant in the room.
20 No one wants to talk about it because it's. There's too
21 many jobs involved. We got to look ourselves in the
22 mirror. It's not the other states doing it. It's us. We
23 are doing it to ourselves, and we're wrecking our
24 fisheries. I don't care. It'll come out in the wash, and
25 someday they're going to be deeply regretting that
26 they've done this to the wild salmon stocks of the North
27 Pacific and Alaska in particular. I appreciate that
28 comment, Tommy. Any further questions or comments on
29 those issues? So.....

30
31 MR. GERVAIS: Mr. Chair, this is Tom.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We -- go ahead.
34 Tim. Tim, go ahead.

35
36 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, I would -- I have two
37 things on Tommy asking about the ownership of the
38 hatcheries and why they're at the mouth and for the most
39 part, they are close to the coast. They're -- we need
40 to always remember there is a king salmon hatchery up
41 in Whitehorse that is -- was put there to mitigate the
42 effects of Whitehorse Dam. So, we actually have hatchery
43 enhancement on the Yukon River. As far as I know, the
44 only major -- no, I shouldn't say that. I just wanted
45 to say that I don't think there's any hatchery influence
46 on the Kuskokwim. The -- a comment you just said-- oh,
47 and then the ownership of these hatcheries. So, Prince
48 William Sound Regional Aquaculture, Cook Inlet Regional
49 Aquaculture Association, I don't know the exact name of
50 the Southeast Alaska Aquaculture Association. These are

1 non-profit companies that are kind of -- they're an
2 association. It mostly all started up when the state was
3 rich with oil and pipeline money and then people were
4 like, oh, wow, we should -- we got all this money, why
5 don't we manufacture more salmon? And I think originally
6 it started out with good intentions, but, then over the
7 course of decades, people were like, wow, the more
8 hatchery production we put out, the more commercial
9 hatchery fish we can catch and the more money we can
10 make. And then the fishermen started making more money
11 and they were buying bigger boats, and they wanted more
12 hatchery production to pay for their bigger boats. And
13 this whole, this whole economic model snowballed on
14 itself, and it got to the point where the increased
15 demand for hatchery production to increase commercial
16 harvest affected the actual food supply of the ocean,
17 enough that wild stocks are affected. And, Jack just
18 said that nobody wants to talk about it. I think a lot
19 of people want to talk about it. I know mostly everybody
20 in the Subsistence community wants to talk about it. I
21 know researchers and scientists that are getting their
22 funding that's not -- I would call it like dirty money
23 in research, like there's scientific research or
24 ostensibly scientific research, but some of it's, you
25 know, is funded by industry groups that are trying to
26 push a certain agenda, such as we've seen increased
27 research into salmon shark predation and other research
28 projects that are kind of intended to deflect the blame
29 from problems with salmon survivability in the marine
30 environment. And we all had really good presentations
31 last March and the All Council meeting with those
32 scientists and researchers talking about the effect of
33 hatchery production in the North Pacific. So, I believe
34 there's a lot of people that are -- that want to talk
35 about hatchery production and want something done with
36 it. But I feel at this point on this day here, February
37 2025, we're not getting cooperation from the Alaska
38 Board of Fish. We're not getting enough cooperation and
39 buying in from Alaska Department of Fish and Game. We're
40 not getting enough cooperation or admission of that
41 they're part of the problem from the commercial fishing
42 fleet. And I'm talking about the state regulated
43 fisheries like salmon seiners, salmon gillnetters. And
44 so, we need to exercise our voices and whatever rights
45 we have. I mean, obviously WIRAC is an advisory Council,
46 we can't -- we don't have rights beyond what's outlined
47 in in title eight of ANILCA. But title eight does have
48 a lot of rights in there but, for some reason, I think
49 because it's inconvenient to advocate or enforce
50 Subsistence rights or -- I don't even know what the

1 exact terminology of it. What's the right of a species,
2 king salmon or chum salmon or coho salmon -- what's
3 their right to actually have a sustaining population?
4 There must be there must be some term for that. So, I
5 know everybody's tired of getting on the short end of
6 the stick, but, basically, when you're a subsistence
7 user rural Alaska, you don't have very good legal
8 resources. You don't have good financial resources. Your
9 population numbers are less than the general population
10 of the state in whole. But I want all the Council members
11 and the staff members to realize that what we're
12 advocating for and fighting for, with maintaining
13 healthy Fish and Game stocks is super important.
14 Probably -- I mean, other than taking care of the
15 immediate needs of your family and your village, these
16 are really like the most important thing that you can
17 do in your life is to -- so when we're dead the next
18 generation, ten generations down the road and 100
19 generations down the road, they can have fish and game
20 populations in which to feed their family and it's not
21 just it's not about calories either or culture. It's
22 like what's coming out of -- what's the -- like what I'm
23 seeing from state government and Federal government
24 saying we don't have to really pay attention to how much
25 salmon is available on the Koyukuk or the Kuskokwim River
26 Yukon River. We can just give these people food stamps
27 or whatever the card is where you can get food. But,
28 when the diet of like the population of the people who
29 live on the river changes to ultra-high processed foods,
30 it's like -- it's basically poison. It's damaging
31 everybody's health, super high rates of chronic diseases
32 that are rooted in poor nutrition quality and then
33 there's additional impact where just mental health,
34 sense of self-worth, your ability to take care of
35 yourself and your family is compromised because you are
36 being eliminated from access to a resource that no longer
37 exists. So, I would -- I just wanted to expand on Jack's
38 assertion that nobody wants to talk about it. It's like
39 a lot of people want to talk about it, and it needs to
40 be talked about, and we need to do better at whatever
41 it's going to take to get these resources back into
42 sustainable populations and back into harvestable
43 populations. Sorry to talk so much.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks, Tim.
46 I didn't mean that nobody wants to talk about it. I
47 mean, the Board process and the Department of Fish and
48 Game, they don't want to think about it. They're like
49 in a state of denial. There's studies that -- you pointed
50 out that there's a hatchery at the -- in Whitehorse and

1 they release fish hatchery fish chinook salmon that go
2 out and compete. So, they're basically they're have
3 [sic] the same problem. The hatchery fish from
4 Whitehorse go down into the Bering Sea, they move into
5 the North Pacific and there's no food for them and
6 they're coming back instead of -- we had escapement goals
7 of 42,000 555,000. They upped that to 75,000. Yeah. What
8 did they get? 32 -- almost 30,000 this year with full
9 closures. It's like it shows that there is a problem
10 even when they're hatchery fish, which are actually a
11 little bit larger than wild stock, they still can't
12 compete in the ocean. This is what we're looking at.
13 That hatchery is actually a -- that should be analyzed
14 scientifically about what that effect is. And so, it's
15 not that no one wants to talk about it. Everybody's
16 starting to realize, I don't think a lot of people
17 realize the hatchery problem. You just go on the website,
18 go on and look at the -- there's papers published by the
19 Department of Fish and Game about the hatcheries, and
20 it shows this increasing releases. This keeps going up
21 like on and on. It doesn't stop, it doesn't top out and
22 they just -- it's -- and if you look at the decline of
23 the wild stocks, it's exponential to this increase in
24 hatchery fish. That's the elephant in the room. But the
25 science doesn't -- the Department of Fish and Game
26 doesn't want to use science. Can't be talking about
27 science. We've got an economic -- it reallocates the
28 resource of the ocean to the cost recovery. It's the
29 seiners have to get money back for all that money they
30 spent on that hatchery fish. It's cost recovery, all the
31 staff and all that stuff. It's a fiasco. It's not that
32 no one -- it's the Board of Fish and the Department of
33 Fish and Game is going to stay in a state of denial
34 until they hit the wall, period and so, we're paying the
35 price. The people who rely on those wild stocks are
36 paying the price and they're under a state mandate for
37 sustained yield management and they're not doing it. So,
38 it's really super frustrating. We got to look ourselves
39 in the mirror. The state of Alaska is the problem. So,
40 we -- that's probably enough for our Council comments.
41 We get super frustrated. That's part of our platform
42 here is to voice our -- blow some steam out and all
43 that. So, we do have one blue card here for Vince
44 Mathews, but I might take that after a short break or
45 make -- take a ten-minute break here, and then we'll
46 have Vince come up and for non-agenda discussion. So,
47 ten-minute break. We'll be back on record at about 11:00.

48
49
50

(off record)

1 (on record)

2
3 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're going to come
4 back on record. If I could get everybody to come back
5 to their seats. And so, we're going to have Vince Mathews
6 come up and then I found out that Geoff Beyersdorf with
7 BLM is here, but he cannot -- he has to leave. He's here
8 this morning and so he -- I would like this Council to
9 have the benefit of the -- of Jeff Beyersdorf to talk
10 about the Ambler Road and some other aspects while he's
11 here so that I -- so I'm going to-- want to go to Vince.
12 Vince is going to make a public comment, and I would
13 like to have -- oh, well, we got some more. Let's see,
14 I wasn't expecting that. So, we have some public comments
15 here. Oh, gee. Okay, so we got to get the public comments
16 because that's our agenda item. So, I'm not sure that I
17 can get you up here Vince. We'll see how -- or correction
18 Geoff, I'm not sure if we can get you up here or not.
19 So, Vince Mathews go ahead, Vince, say state your name
20 for the record.

21
22 MR. MATHEWS: Yes, my name is Vince
23 Mathews, and Mathews is spelled M A T H E W S, one T
24 cause [sic] I'm Irish. I can give you a long story on
25 that. but, anyways for those that don't know me, I was
26 a regional Council Coordinator for Alaska Department of
27 Fish and Game way back in the 80s for 14 advisory
28 committees, and then I advanced, I suppose, one way of
29 looking at it to Regional Coordinator for Western and
30 Eastern Interior since 1993, and retired -- and moved
31 on to a refuge position in 2009. The reason I'm here is,
32 one of your former Council members I discovered was ill
33 and that's Benedict Jones. So, I visited him a couple
34 of times and for those that don't know, Benedict Jones,
35 he's an Native elder from Koyukuk. He served on the
36 Middle Yukon, I believe advisory committee and on this
37 Council. His illnesses as he broke part of his hip. So,
38 he's in a long-term healing phase and for many elders,
39 Benedict -- I mean Pollock just did it a few minutes
40 ago. They're like an encyclopedia. For me it's like going
41 to a friend's house that got a new encyclopedia, and you
42 pull out the different books and you look and learn
43 about all different stuff. With Native elders they don't
44 -- you don't have to pull out a book they start sharing.
45 So, what he did share with me, Pollock just mentioned,
46 he said there was a fish crash in 1939. He said 1940.
47 Benedict went on about Sidney Huntington, that one of
48 the crashes was because one winter, I don't know which
49 one, it was 100 below zero, and it killed all the fish
50 -- or the -- you know, the eggs and the spawning grounds.

1 So, my objective meeting with Benedict was to thank him
2 and to apologize. I apologize to him that I listened,
3 but we didn't listen when he gave us insights on why
4 there's no salmon and I get very angry reading the paper
5 years later that there's some study confirming that it's
6 water temperature -- when he told us many, many years
7 ago. So, he then went on and asked me to share that he
8 says, leave our fish alone. He's talking about tagging
9 and other stuff. He says that the fish get confused and
10 can't figure on where to go and for those that have been
11 around a long time, Benedict, when he talked about fish,
12 always shared that he knew when to put his net in the
13 water; was when this certain bird would be in the bushes.
14 So, I asked him, and his wife was there, Eliza, and she
15 quickly spoke up and said it was a savannah sparrow. So,
16 for those that are into ecology, this is something that
17 I will look into further. Now for the rest -- for the
18 new staff to OSM and others. I came from a blue-collar
19 family so, when my brothers and sisters would say, what
20 did you do as a regional coordinator? I drew a blank.
21 So finally, I came up with something. People within OSM
22 are the clutch. The engine is a subsistence user, and
23 the vehicle is the Federal Subsistence Program. So, all
24 of you, your team people, your -- on that you're the
25 clutch between that engine which is Subsistence, which
26 was defined in ANILCA title eight, and you help that
27 power from that engine be transferred into the Federal
28 Subsistence Program so it can go forward. I'm not going
29 to hoodwink you guys, as a clutch you get burnt both
30 ways, but that's okay. It's part of a learning process.
31 You're the front face of the program many times, and the
32 program and government can be very slow. So, with that
33 I would share with you that I want to thank you for your
34 continuing dedication. I just was talking to staff back
35 there. Yeah. It's very frustrating to hear these same
36 concerns about hatchery fish and all that. For those
37 that know Virgil, he'd be yelling in my ear. My memory
38 here years ago saying the same thing. So, I want to
39 thank you for staying in there and, yes, we need to get
40 more involved, more Council members. Hopefully that will
41 happen. So, with that I'll stop. But Benedict is in town
42 here recovering. He concerned me, when I asked him how
43 he's doing, he says I'm really tired. So, I'm hoping
44 that was just because I broke them away from lunch and
45 not that it's any indication of his overall health. So,
46 with that, I'll stop.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Vince.
49 Any questions for Vince or comments?
50

1 (No response)

2
3 I will comment on your -- you know, the
4 decline in the late 30s, 40s. There's other -- there's
5 other marine -- there's factors but one of the drivers
6 is the marine declines and so, we had this -- in the
7 90s. There was this chum salmon decline, and we went
8 into restrictions and then -- I remember these 90s
9 restrictions. So, we get into these restrictions. But,
10 if you look at when those were happening and where the
11 hatchery releases were then, they weren't nothing like
12 they are now. So as time goes on, as the hatcheries keep
13 continuing to put out more and more fish, the recovery
14 time has gotten to the point where the returns can't
15 return. They didn't come back in 2 or 3 --
16 (indiscernible) three -- in three years or four years.
17 They're not coming back. It's like-- so I do -- you
18 know, there are other declines, but there's documented
19 declines in 1919. I mean, significant declines in 1919
20 where people had to kill all their dogs and were
21 starving. That was a problem. So, any -- oh Don. Go
22 ahead.

23
24 MR. HONEA: Yeah. Mr. Chair. Thank you,
25 Mr. Chair. I just want to compliment you on your remarks.
26 I believe that when I first got on this particular
27 Council, you were our coordinator at the time and
28 appreciate that many years and some of the Board members
29 aren't here, but you are, like, a mentor to myself, and
30 a good role model. I appreciate that.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, Tommy. Go
33 ahead.

34
35 MR. KRISKA: Yeah. Well, Vince, I
36 appreciate everything that you did back in the -- all
37 your days up to now. I was on the Western Interior
38 Regional Council up to 2005 from, I think 98, 99 back
39 in those days and once I moved here, I had to get off
40 of it. And then after I moved back, I wound up back on
41 it but Benedict -- yeah, it's kind of sad to see that
42 old man. He's 90 years old. He was just going out, you
43 know just to enjoy a grouse hunting here this last fall,
44 and he with a four-wheeler, and he stepped off the four-
45 Wheeler he shot a grouse, and he was tipping off the
46 four Wheeler to go get it. And he stepped off the four-
47 Wheeler at the same time he stepped into a hole and
48 fell. Then he broke his hip and he -- well, actually,
49 he walked away from the four-wheeler, grabbed the grouse
50 was turning around and he fell. It was about a -- I

1 don't know, 50, 60ft from the four-Wheeler. Then he had
2 to crawl all the way back to the four-Wheeler. No one
3 knew where he was. So, they started looking for him.
4 They found him, and he couldn't get himself back onto
5 the bike and it was already getting dark, but his
6 grandson found him in the -- and he had a rough healing
7 thing -- he broke it two more -- or, I guess, two more
8 times ever since he'd been in the hospital. He can't
9 stay in one place, and he don't give it time to heal.
10 He fell and broke it again at the hospital or somewhere.
11 Was this going to get up and walk out but, yeah, he he's
12 still trying, but he -- yeah. He's getting -- seemed
13 like his voice is changing and everything and I have a
14 lot of concerns for him, and I intend to visit him while
15 I'm here. Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Tommy.
18 Yeah. Ben used to be on our Council here, and he told
19 us a lot of stuff. He told us back when we were, you
20 know, they would initiate commercial harvest at the
21 quarter point on the Yukon River for chinook. And Ben
22 said that's the Koyukuk River stocks. They -- if they
23 open at the quarter point, it'll wipe the Koyukuk stocks
24 off. So, they started reanalyzing when they had
25 commercial openings. Ben knew a lot about salmon. So,
26 Ben was a huge part of this Council, and we deeply missed
27 him. Vince was a big -- was a -- our coordinator for a
28 long time. Vince did a great job for this Council and
29 when he was a Subsistence for the refuge, he interacted
30 with this Council a lot. So, we really appreciate all
31 the work you've done in your work life, Vince. And thanks
32 for coming to speak to us.

33
34 MR. MATHEW: Well, good luck and have a
35 great meeting.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead there,
38 Robert.

39
40 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
41 thank you for being the coordinator for all these years.
42 You know something that we do talk about some of those
43 guys that are not on the Board anymore. We ask where you
44 are, and I'd have to call Nissa to find out where you
45 are. So, we kind of kept an eye on, you know, where knew
46 where you were So. But, again, thank you for all the
47 time that you gave to us. Thank you, Vince.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Pollock.
50

1 MR. SIMMON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank
2 you, Vince. You had pretty good comments. I know Vince
3 for a long time, and I went to a lot of Fish and Game
4 and virtual meeting and benches. I was sitting there and
5 today he's still here in Cook County, concerned about
6 our way of life so, good comments, Vince. Thank you.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And Jenny.

9
10 MS. PELKOLA: I would like to echo the
11 words. Thank you to you too. You were the coordinator
12 when I first got in over 20 years ago, and I was
13 wondering why they were calling you chief or warden, and
14 I was wondering, is he a warden? I couldn't figure it
15 out, you know? And I guess it's just a name that the
16 boys gave you then. And I just want to thank you.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That was a term
19 that Robert and his cousin Jimmy used to call Vince when
20 he would, like, get them to get -- show up on time and
21 do various things. He -- they -- he -- they felt he was
22 more like a prison warden. So, thanks so much, Vince.
23 So, we're going to go through these public comments on
24 non-agenda items. So oh, George Yaska and so, yeah, they
25 got out of order there. Good to see you again, George.

26
27 MR. YASKA: Good morning, Thank you, Mr.
28 Chair. Members of the Council, it's good to be here and
29 speaking on these issues. I work for the U.S. Fish and
30 Wildlife Service, and my job title is Indigenous
31 Knowledge Liaison. So, I sought permission to speak on
32 issues that I'm familiar with indigenous knowledge of
33 the people. So, I'll back up briefly and say that I have
34 a traditional knowledge that's been passed on to me
35 through my own observations and growing up in fishing
36 on the Yukon River and living on the Kuskokwim and then
37 fishing again on the Yukon. And my father, George Yaska
38 Sr., has always spoken to me ever since the first time
39 that I started talking to people about -- and asking
40 questions of issues of importance. So, all of a sudden,
41 he realized I'm an extension of him and I had better be
42 taught the right way to talk about these things. So, I
43 thank him for that. I can speak to some of these issues,
44 and I hear my cousin Tom talk about the role of us and
45 the audience, and I take that to heart. And this is why
46 I asked for permission from my boss to relay what I know
47 about our way of life. And so, I grew up fishing on the
48 Koyukuk River. I was operating the boat by 1967, and I
49 was only five years old, no, seven years old. So, but
50 times were different then by the time I was five and was

1 dragging the can of gas down to the boat. So, times were
2 a lot different, and we were taught to be independent
3 and to think and do things safely. And we're taught
4 about survival, and we're taught about caring for the
5 country out there, that these things can't speak for
6 themselves. So, it's our responsibility to talk about
7 those things. So, we began to notice the weight of king
8 salmon in the 70s already coming down and I remember
9 late Uncle Franklin Madras talking about seeing oil
10 slicks in that 1920 fishing disaster, 1919 or 1920. And
11 I was traveling down the Yukon two years ago and saw the
12 great oil slicks coming out of the Novi River. It ran
13 for miles and miles and miles, and I recall seeing oil
14 slicks like that in the Koyukuk River way back in the
15 1960s. And so, I asked a scientist about it, and he
16 said, well, these lands have been releasing hydrocarbons
17 for a long time. Climate change has been happening for
18 a long time. The end of the Ice age has been happening
19 for a long time so, there's been a warming and a loss
20 of permafrost and the release of the frozen things into
21 the water and he says perhaps it's related to that and
22 certainly on the Novi River today with all of that
23 permafrost that's been released and the release of those
24 hydrocarbons, it's evident on the face of it. And so, I
25 wanted to relate that this has been happening for a long
26 time. But, along with the recent issues from the 1970s,
27 when we started seeing dramatic declines in weight of
28 king salmon and when my late aunt Angela Huntington asked
29 her late husband, Sidney Huntington, why the weights
30 have gone down -- this was in 1980 of the king salmon -
31 - he didn't really have an answer and we now know that
32 you're right, Mr. Chair, about Roger Owen's work in the
33 University of Washington and the analysis of the science
34 of the release of pink salmon into -- from the Prince
35 William Sound into the Gulf of Alaska. That as they
36 increased more in 1973 to 1975 to 1979, from 12,000 to
37 20,000 to 45,000 to 200,000, that there was a direct
38 correlation to the increase in releases of pink salmon,
39 to the decline of the weight and productivity of king
40 salmon. There are direct correlations. It's clear as
41 day. So, you're definitely right in that respect. So, I
42 just wanted to say that I saw that. Many people noticed
43 it from early on and I'll stop on that point, but you
44 are definitely correct Mr. Chair. The -- on another point
45 on the loss of black bears. I was asked in 1995 by the
46 late John Starr Junior to bring him down to the Novi
47 River. He said, can you call somebody and have us go
48 down? I want you to go down with me. I was working at
49 Tanana chiefs, and so I called the Tanana Tribal Council
50 to bring us down and Fred Nikolai for the Tribal Council

1 brought John and I down to the Novi River. He said he
2 saw -- that he heard that there were no more black bears
3 in the Novi River, that grizzly bears were taking over
4 and this was years ago, and it was something that the
5 late Edward Simon talked about in the 1975. He said,
6 ever since you guys made us stop hunting grizzlies in
7 the 1950s, this population has boomed. So, where's our
8 black bears? Where's our moose? These grizzlies are
9 having a field day, and it took a while for it to reach
10 the rest of Alaska but, by 1995, when John and Fred
11 Nikolai and I went up 75 miles up the Novi River, we
12 walked, I think, in five different places where John
13 knew of black bear dens. All those black bear dens were
14 old and collapsed. We saw no black bear tracks. We saw
15 a lot of grizzly tracks. So, the understanding that I
16 have from my father was that his people before him his
17 father, (in native) and (in native) father. They always
18 talked about; you have to keep those populations down.
19 That's what my father told me. You have to keep those
20 populations of the things that are eating all of these
21 other things down and try to get it early. Populations
22 of grizzly, of wolf and of eagle and another story from
23 1995, I had a fish biologist on staff at Tanana chiefs.
24 He and members of fisheries staff from the U.S. fish
25 Wildlife service were waiting for salmon to come up the
26 hog River into Clear Creek. They hadn't come up, and
27 they noticed an eagle sitting on the cottonwood there
28 in an island -- back in the island where slack water,
29 but there was water. Great amount of geese and ducklings,
30 goslings and ducklings. And the late Bergman Sam said
31 they're waiting for those birds to become a little
32 bigger. And so, sure enough, they sat there for two
33 weeks. They didn't move for two weeks, and right when
34 they were bite sized, they swooped in, and one day they
35 took 90% of that population of goslings and ducklings.
36 So that illustrates to me that my grandfather and great
37 grandfather were definitely correct. They knew what they
38 were talking about. So, when we think of the wildlife
39 and the interactions of people and wildlife and animals
40 it's been happening for a very long time, perhaps
41 thousands of years. We've impacted and managed fish and
42 wildlife, and it was our own style of management. And
43 so, I just wanted to relate that, Mr. Chair. I had other
44 comments, but I'm blanking right now. Thank you.

45
46 CHAIRPE REAKOFF: I appreciate those
47 comments that customary and traditional knowledge is
48 being transcribed. And so, we have people who are looking
49 at our transcripts over time. There's a lot of knowledge
50 that gets conveyed from the public into these regional

1 Councils, because this is a forum for that to happen.
2 And I really appreciate you pointing out these various
3 things, because we had a meeting in Galena several years
4 ago right before Sidney passed on, and he was deaf. I
5 had him -- I broke the meeting. I say, come to the mic.
6 He says I can't hear what you're saying. I say, we're
7 here to listen. Sidney and his discussion was, you've
8 got to take these brown bears. He is shouting, as Sidney
9 always did, as loud as he could into the mic. The grizzly
10 -- the brown bears will eat all the of all of the black
11 bears, then they'll eat all the moose, and they're going
12 to control your lives. And he was pointing at us just
13 like that, and they're going to control your lives and
14 that -- as the salmon decline in the bear, the brown
15 bears don't have salmon. They're really starting to put
16 the herd on the moose and I -- and there's hardly any
17 black bears. There are black bears are gone. I don't
18 know that the black bear population is been this low for
19 a long, long time. So, thanks for those comments and I
20 got -- Pollock wants to say something. Go ahead.

21
22 MR. SIMON: Yeah. I want to make a
23 comment to (indiscernible). You were a lot of grizzlies
24 last few years, and I guess they've been eating black
25 bears, which is no -- don't see any more black bears.
26 Used to be if you can't get moose, you just now they
27 wouldn't - you could pack a black bear and cook meat,
28 but, today there's nothing, really has been
29 (indiscernible) and the last several years is
30 (indiscernible) blueberry crops or such (indiscernible)
31 impacting them. Good comments George, thank you.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: From Jenny.

34
35 MS. PELKOLA: George, thank you for that.
36 That was very interesting. I hope more -- I mean, you
37 know whatever your scientist -- is that what you said
38 or...?

39
40 MR. YASKA: Well, Native, Native
41 scientists.

42
43 MS. PELKOLA: Oh okay. Well, I think
44 they're very important because that's where I learned a
45 lot of my stuff from my parents, and I never really knew
46 my grandparents but, years ago, we used to have a Fish
47 camp in between Koyukuk and Nulato. It was called Nine
48 Mile and the people from Huslia used to come down to
49 Atlas. Your grandpa George Atla, the (indiscernible) and
50 the Sams, Tony Sams family and there were others, but

1 those are the ones that I remembered. And in fact, my
2 mother delivered George Atla Jr. at fish camp, and she
3 always talks about it, but, thank you for that. That's
4 very interesting and I think the people don't listen to
5 the elders. They think they're just old timers and they
6 don't know what they're talking about, but they do know
7 what they're talking about because they lived it. And I
8 think it's very important that we get a more traditional
9 knowledge you know, going unrecognized in the state of
10 Alaska or wherever in the world. But thank you very
11 much. That's very encouraging. And keep your work up.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Jenny.
14 And Don, you want to comment?

15
16 MR. HONEA: Oh, yeah. Thank you, Mr.
17 Chair. Thank you, George, for that presentation. I also
18 like Robert and all of us are concerned about the brown
19 bear population and stuff. I mean, I've seen it on the
20 on the Novi itself. Where they've taken black bears.
21 There's just nothing there except hair. They eat
22 everything, but I just had a comment on, you know,
23 whether it was on the Novi or whether it was on the
24 Koyukuk or something. The studies of that oily -- I'm
25 just wondering if anybody ever studied that or do they
26 -- you know, does it come and go or something? I mean,
27 I remember a few years ago, I was at a fish meeting and
28 we had a presentation, I think it was in the evening at
29 the university, at the campus there. And they knew
30 intricately, really studied the population that goes
31 into the Novi, goes into the Susitna or whatever
32 tributary there is and now I'm just wondering is that -
33 - you know, I'm trying to figure out why, as we go up
34 the river, less and less fish and stuff -- but I just
35 had a question on that, You know, it's interesting. I
36 mean, the very fact that that Sheen or something that I
37 see, I mean, I wonder if it's -- is it constant? Do you
38 just notice it? Does anybody ever figure out is it coming
39 from up toward McGrath or, you know, the way the Novi
40 runs?

41
42 MR. YASKA: Mr. Chair, thank you. If I
43 might answer.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead.

46
47 MR. YASKA: So, as I understand it, the
48 way I hear it now from the scientists that the release
49 of oil or hydrocarbons into the water from the
50 degradation or the melting of the permafrost has been

1 going on for a long time. We see it physically around
2 Huslia, where lands that were high, 25ft high in the
3 past, and perhaps a landmark on the land are now sunk
4 and they're low Tundra, they're bog from either melting
5 -- some melting occurring down there. Some of this
6 melting of the permafrost occurs near riverbanks. And
7 there is work now, but I'm not sure if it's understood
8 yet or have been analyzed. And the Kobuk River, where
9 there's heavy release of hydrocarbons and minerals into
10 water. So heavy that the water is orange. So, the USGS
11 and the National Park Service, and I don't recall the
12 college, maybe it's University of Colorado are looking
13 at that right now.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I live in the
16 Brooks Range, and we got more of the creek that I live
17 on Wiseman Creek has just turned orange since 2017. Lots
18 and lots of iron oxide coming out. Did you have a comment
19 on George's presentation? We're going to move on with
20 some other comments.

21
22 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You
23 know, George, you're right about this grizzly bear. We
24 followed one about five springs ago. It went to all the
25 dens of where the black bears were and dragged the mother
26 out, injured her so bad. Take the cubs out, eat the
27 cubs, and we would find all these little heads, you
28 know, like, you know, it's kind of -- they wouldn't eat
29 the head. Then we would track it some more, and then a
30 couple later. Then we'd catch the bear again where it
31 would drag another bear out. And I think this is just
32 like a constant thing for all of them. Not only one
33 bear, but that's what they do all spring long. Another
34 thing we found out, you know, the days of the 30, 30 and
35 30 out of 6 are over. All these young guys are getting
36 like, 375, 300 now because of the numerous bears right
37 in our town. People got them on their cameras, standing
38 on their porch, looking in their windows. So, this is
39 something that we have to really kind of invent ourselves
40 on how to use a bigger gun, because before it never was
41 needed. You know, you had the moose stew 30, 30 and 30
42 out of 6 and that was about it, because the moose didn't
43 have such adrenaline in its system to repossess itself
44 and attack you. So that's -- thanks for that commentary,
45 George.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you.
48 Appreciate your comment and look forward to working with
49 you in the future. And so, then we got another Doug
50 Patsy on to speak to us. Come on up, Doug.

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MR. PATSY: Thank you, guys, for seeing me. I just want to thank you guys, all of you, for what you're doing. I know you guys have been in here for years, and you always say the younger ones got to get in there. Well, I'm one of them younger ones now. So now, over the years...

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Would you like to state where you're from?

MR. PATSY: Oh, I'm from Nulato, Yeah, I live in Nulato there. Oh, just -- I'm a Subsistence user. I grew up -- was raised in the Subsistence lifestyle by my grandparents, Justin and Marianne Patsy.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: You want to be on the regional Council?

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. PATSY: I was on the middle Yukon.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: At this regional Council?

MR. PATSY: Oh.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: On the Western Regional Advisory Council?

MR. PATSY: Sure, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're looking for membership. Okay. Yeah.

MR. PATSY: I've been in contact with Nissa before.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're looking for younger people to work into the system so, continue on. Get in there.

MR. PATSY: It was good comments that George was making about the Grizzly bear, Robert brought that up also. I know since Tommy moved to Nulato there, he -- I kind of -- he took me under his wing and showed me the outdoor lifestyle. Bear hunting. I already kind of knew about the wolf hunting there, but every spring we go out and we're harvesting I don't know, 5 or 6

1 grizzly bears. But, since then, our moose population has
2 boomed. The middle of Yukon, I don't know if you guys
3 know or heard about it. I'm sure Glen knows about it.
4 Glen keeps the numbers in check there, but, from --
5 correct me if I'm wrong, Glen but, from 2012, we went
6 to 2000 moose in our area. Four years later, I think
7 2016, we're at 4000 and now we're up over 6000 moose in
8 our area. That's due to a lot of predator control. I'm
9 one of the ones that's out there every day when I'm not
10 working, riding -- the villages in our area, they do a
11 bounty. I think Nulato is sitting at 350 per wolf. I
12 don't know what the other villages are doing. But grizzly
13 bears -- this fall, I was over in Kaiyuh, heading towards
14 my cabin, and there's a couple of young guys from Kaltag,
15 they shot a grizzly bear. I know you guys are familiar
16 with grizzly bears, you don't eat them in the fall time.
17 They stink. They're musky. The meat's no good. This thing
18 was perfect. It was like a springtime bear. Almost like
19 a black bear. Kaiyuh, we've never seen grizzly bears up
20 in there before, but they've kind of migrated in there.
21 And the -- you could tell if a grizzly is good by the
22 color of the fat. The fat was white. yeah, it was -- I
23 made bear dogs out of it and it was -- it's freaking
24 delicious. You can't tell the difference between beef,
25 pork or whatever. The hot dogs. And two weeks later,
26 same spot 200 yards away, my wife and I and my daughter
27 and my son were in the boat, and there was another one
28 there. I was like, where the heck are these things coming
29 from? But -- and all my riding I do, I do a lot of
30 thinking. We're not going to take no pressure off of
31 trawlers or anything, but I see our buddy from North
32 Pacific is not in here anymore, but, what should we call
33 it? Grizzly bears. I don't know, Fish and Wildlife in
34 here studied them or not, but, with the amount of grizzly
35 bears that there are in the interior of Alaska and the
36 tributaries for the Yukon but they, I'm sure, eat a lot
37 of our fish also. I don't know if they're spawned out
38 yet or what, but I'm getting off the point of I don't
39 want to take nothing, no pressure off of trawlers or
40 anything on that point. But, no, there -- like I said
41 about that grizzly bear though, with no smell in there
42 and the end of August that's very unlikely to have
43 especially interior of Alaska when they -- you know, the
44 bears should be eating fish all summer long and all its
45 living off of is meat and vegetation and berries. We
46 opened it up, and there's -- the intestines were blue.
47 It was, yeah, it was like a black bear almost, you know.
48 I was going to bring up another point. I heard it from,
49 I think it was Ivan (indiscernible) grayling jet boats
50 and our tributaries especially in the -- when the salmon

1 are spawning or whatever. We get it a lot in the Nulato
2 River with jet boats going up there. I think someone
3 mentioned in the Anvik River before the sport fishers
4 there, their jet boats were going up in there and they
5 were wiping out the gravel that was -- the salmon were
6 spawning. It's things like that, you gotta [sic] little
7 things like that that you gotta look at. In order for
8 us to help our fish. Again, not taking pressure off of
9 the trawlers, but help ourselves, you know. It's like
10 the people that live here in the city. It's like you
11 take something away and you're sick for it. It's like,
12 take every coffee shop off the corner here, take that
13 coffee pot away there, you're going to be sick for it.
14 Everybody will be sleeping in here. But that's what they
15 did with our salmon. You know, we're sick for it.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I have a question
18 about these jet boats. Is that something that's new?
19 These jet boats going up to Nulato River? They run right
20 over those -- where the kings spawn, right over the
21 river. They blow all that out?

22
23 MR. PATSY: Yeah, I -- was it -- I think
24 it was Ivan that said it before. Correct me if I'm wrong
25 on that, Robert. I think I was at a meeting and Robert
26 mentioned that before, I think also. They said those jet
27 boats in the Anvik River, they were cruising up the
28 river and they could see the row on the sides of the cut
29 banks there where those jets were washing them up on the
30 banks. Yeah, and that that kills a lot of the fish also.
31 No, I was going to make a post. I see all -- like Pollock,
32 Jenny, Robert, they're elders, you know. And I think
33 it's time for us as younger generation to step up and
34 get on board with these guys, get their knowledge from
35 them. You know they've been in there fighting the good
36 fight for years, and it'd be good for some of us younger
37 ones to learn from them while they're still in there.
38 Thank you, guys.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Appreciate that.
41 question Jenny.

42
43 MS. PELKOLA: I didn't get your name.

44
45 MR. PATSY: Doug Patsy. I'm from Nulato.

46
47 MS. PELKOLA: Okay. Thank you, Doug. That
48 was very, very good. Like we said, we have two vacant
49 seats on the Board right now. All you got to do is put
50 your name in there, but thank you. You know for coming

1 and talking to us. It makes us feel like we're doing
2 something, and I'm ready to step off the Board and this
3 is going to be my last term, for sure.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Tommy.

6

7 MR. KRISKA: Yeah. Thank you, Doug, for
8 your comments there. One of the things that -- were I
9 was saying a few years back was why a lot of the grizzly
10 bears, you know, there are -- a lot of people wouldn't
11 eat them, but they're never realized that in this last
12 few six, seven years, there's hardly any fish there and
13 so they don't really have a lot of fish to eat. They eat
14 what they can, but then they're forced to go into the
15 hills and eat the blueberries and that's one of the
16 reasons that now that the bears that were taken are
17 really fat and they taste different because they're
18 forced to eat the berries and it's -- which is good. I
19 mean, you know, we're not shooting them for nothing and
20 just throwing them away. So, and I wish there was another
21 way, Ms. Nissa, that we could just add this guy to a
22 Board. As a Board, you know, voted on and put up here
23 instead of the state. They go through a lot of
24 regulations -- rules and regulations, background checks,
25 all this stuff when we know these people and it'd be a
26 big step that if we ever can get something like that for
27 a recommendation or just -- I don't know, I lost my
28 words, but, to appoint him ourselves so, it would be
29 nice, thank you.

30

31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah. Well, the way
32 the appointments go, they have to be vetted and a whole
33 bunch of stuff and the Federal Board actually reviews
34 those applications, and so -- but we're -- it's not that
35 hard to get on here, but it's a whole process and that's
36 -- we're not the appointing source. It's not like
37 Advisory Committee where we vote them in there. This is
38 a regional Council that has to work through the Federal
39 -- were an arm of the Federal Subsistence Board. We had
40 Brown Bear up north. I live in the Brooks Range. We hunt
41 them quite a bit. We don't have very many salmon in the
42 valley that I live in, but there are predatory bears.
43 And predatory bears, you know them -- watching bears.
44 Predatory bears got really long claws because they don't
45 dig a lot of those bears dig rut vegetation. If they got
46 really long, smooth claws, they don't dig that much.
47 They walks [sic] crosswind. When you see them, they're
48 always walking crosswind hunting the wind so that they
49 can go kill something. Those kind, I don't really want
50 to eat those kind that much. Those have (indiscernible)

1 flavor. Whereas those -- the ones that dig roots a lot,
2 they got a dirty face, they got the short claws or
3 they're out in the blueberry patch. Those are the ones
4 with the white fat. The white fat is the thing. I see
5 somebody killed a bear last spring. I was like, oh,
6 white fat. He says you want half I say, I'll take as
7 much as you want to give me. That was a nice bear --
8 excellent made -- and I jarred quite a bit. The really
9 nice jar. Jar that bear made takes a long time. Jar the
10 fat jar the meat, you like that? Really good meat. Yeah.
11 Oh, Pollock. Go ahead.

12
13 MR. SIMON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
14 (indiscernible) Doug's comments to me and Jenny, we are
15 getting kind of old, but we keep coming back and things
16 like this. And then the interesting part is we should
17 have more young people get interested in the sport. Yeah,
18 good comments Doug.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Robert.

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22 MR. KRISKA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank
23 you for that Discussion here Mr. Patsy, which is true,
24 you know, like I have worked with my son and some other
25 people on how to hunt grizzly bear without, you know,
26 kind of endangering themselves and endangering other
27 people too. So, this is something that we have to learn,
28 and we use the word incentive when we do things. We
29 don't use the bounty, because I know the friends of
30 animals will eventually catch up with us. So that's why
31 we use the word incentive. And one of the things too,
32 that we learned that if you hang a wolf skin on your
33 porch, that bear will never come on your porch, because
34 that grizzly bear has respect for that wolf, even though
35 it's dead, it's hanging there because they're both
36 carnivorous animals. Something to remember if you have
37 a lot of bears in your area, just hang a little skin on
38 your step. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you.
41 Appreciate your comments Doug, hope you get your
42 application in. And so, we need to have people on this
43 Council, and I really enjoy having people that are on
44 the Council that are out doing stuff out in the field,
45 been around a lot of elders and implying that knowledge
46 of the elders. So, I appreciate that.

47
48 MR. PATSY: Thank you, guys, again.

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1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And so, before
2 lunch, I want to have Geoff Beyersdorf come up to the
3 mic because he's not going to be able to be here later
4 today and tomorrow. And there's important issues with
5 the Bureau of Land Management. So, I would like to know
6 the status of the Ambler Road and some other aspects of
7 the BLM and the interior of Alaska within our region.
8 Thank you, Geoff, for coming to the mic and thanks so
9 much for the for the treats that you've given us here.
10 Go ahead.

11
12 MR. BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
13 Through the Chair to the members just -- I apologize
14 that I'm not here for both days. Today's just the kind
15 of the day that I can be here and all I wanted to do
16 really was give you an update in regards to some bigger
17 picture issues that are going on. Just to give -- I
18 don't have a lot of final decisions or anything like
19 that, but as I think many people are well aware,
20 President Trump has been issuing executive orders, and
21 he gave a specific executive order for Alaska in regards
22 to unleashing Alaska's energy resources. That was also
23 followed up by Secretary Burgum, issued a secretarial
24 order. Within the executive order and the secretarial
25 order, there are many different things, but, in
26 particular the BLM there's a reference to the Ambler
27 Road and the decision. There's also a reference to the
28 Central Yukon Resource Management Plan and that
29 decision, and then also to Public Land Order 5150. The
30 -- what was in the executive order, and the secretarial
31 order was a little bit confusing to us. And so, we've
32 gone through them both and then prepared some comments
33 to kind of better understand what their goals are and
34 in addition to that, I've been preparing some briefing
35 papers that have been taken up to our headquarters level
36 through our state director. Not only to understand what
37 the goals are, but, then if we understand what the goals
38 are, here are some options to be able to help you to
39 reach whatever your goals are within this
40 administration. I think that the last two things I will
41 leave you with is that it's becoming very obvious to
42 this administration that Public Land Order 5150 is kind
43 of the key to what they're looking at trying to obtain
44 through the Ambler Road decision or through the Central
45 Yukon RMP. We don't -- I don't have anything final yet.
46 A week ago, Friday, I sent up those briefing papers to
47 our state director to meet with the national director
48 in Washington, D.C., and I haven't heard anything back.
49 So, I would just say at this point, those are in the
50 process. I just kind of wanted you to know that they're

1 embedded in secretarial and executive orders, and I know
2 that those are some things that have been of interest
3 to this Council. Thank you.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I would like to
6 obtain those -- your responses to that -- the or -- I
7 would like to get up -- the order, see the orders -- the
8 presidential orders myself and I would like to see your
9 responses to those. This Council is -- been involved in
10 the whole Ambler Road, the RMP process and the 5150 and
11 so -- and in the western interior Bering Sea public land
12 orders -- issues. We've discussed all those. Ill state
13 for the record right now that if those orders are lifted,
14 it will have an extreme impact on Subsistence uses of
15 the people of who reside in this -- Because it - what -
16 - yeah, like conveyance of the 5150 takes away the
17 Subsistence opportunity for 2.1 million acres. I
18 reminded an individual just the other day that was
19 talking about the 5150, I says [sic] that eliminates
20 Subsistence the rural Subsistence priority for many
21 people. I mean, it's not that there's people from
22 Kaktovik. They're going in and out of an Kaktovik all
23 the time lately because they got Ice roads in there. So,
24 there's a bunch of people that are using the road.
25 There's people from Allakaket came up into the Brooks
26 Range. They don't have caribou down there. So, an
27 individual from Allakaket came up and got seven caribou
28 up there -- were up in -- up the valley from us under
29 Federal Subsistence and took them back to Allakaket.
30 It's an important Subsistence for me. That's what I do.
31 I live from predominantly from that 5150 lands and so
32 that's a -- it would take -- completely take away our
33 Subsistence uses. So, I do want the record to reflect
34 that, you know, the Resource Management Plan allows
35 mining and so forth in the, within the Dalton Highway
36 Corridor area, the 5150 area. Placer mining has little
37 effect on what -- the animal resources and the fishery
38 resources we have because they're settling ponds and so
39 forth. There's a place where they mined extensively just
40 to the west of Wiseman about ten years ago, that's
41 growing back in brush. There is a -- right now the moose
42 of deep snow are going to that mining area where it's
43 all these willows are growing back there. It's like a
44 burn or something. So, the moose are -- there's a bunch
45 of moose back there because they it's growing back to
46 the age classes of willows that they like. So, I think
47 that there's opportunities in the area for mining and
48 so forth, which the administration's wanting to have
49 mining in this on these 5150 lands but it's -- there's
50 no reason to throw the baby out with the bathwater

1 either. So, I wanted to state that on the record because
2 this thing is in play. I would like to know your
3 response. So that would be my comment. Any further
4 comments on Geoff's' presentation on what's going on in
5 the changing political climate and lands in Alaska?

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(Simultaneous speech)

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MR. GERVAIS: Mr. Chair...

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Rob.....

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MR. GERVIAS: This is Jim.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I'll take -- okay.
Go ahead, Tim, and then it's Robert.

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MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Geoff, this is Tim Gervais. Can you briefly -- I don't
quite understand the status. Like, how far did the Ambler
Road decision not to be built get advanced during the
Biden administration? And then how complicated -- or
what timeline would it take to unwind that if the Trump
administration was heavily in favor of putting that road
in? And I just take your response, but I just want to
emphasize that having that area of Alaska remain
roadless is a huge factor in the fish, wildlife and the
residents of the area. It really would be a very
detrimental development for the Subsistence of --
Subsistence economy, if that -- if a road was put in as
planned.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Do you have a
response, Geoff?

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MR. BEYERSDORF: Through the Chair, to
the member Gervais. Hi Tim, by the way. You know, as far
as the Ambler decision. The Ambler decision, the record
of decision, the final SCIS was this last -- was in June
of 2024. And within that the proposal had been to issue
a right-of-way grant for them to be able to build the
road, you know, starting off the Dalton Highway
Corridor, our decision at that time was that because of
the impacts the Subsistence under ANILCA title eight
that we ended up turning down the proposal and then not
issuing the right-of-way grant. So that was final at
that time, Tim, and I'll stop there to see if you have
questions.

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Is there a question
2 on that, Tim?

3
4 MR. GERVAIS: No, no, that's what I
5 wanted to know, and I thought it was final. So now that
6 it's final, does that -- how long can that take
7 precedence or are we actually in a rule-making regime
8 where whatever it is, every 4 or 8 years, the Bureau of
9 Land Management flips flops, you know, basically 180
10 degree turn on what the road policy is going to be.
11 Like, what's it going to take for the Trump
12 administration to unwind that -- the June 2024 decision,
13 if they want to be pro road?

14
15 MR. BEYERSDORF: Well, through the Chair
16 to the member. I guess, one thing -- to clarify, it's
17 not that the BLM is quote unquote flip flopping. It is,
18 you know, we work at the behest of the of the president
19 and the Congress. So, it's whatever the administration
20 priorities are and so, if they change, then we have to
21 -- then we work with that. As far as the timeline to
22 unwind, Member Gervais, I guess what I would say is it
23 all depends on where the Secretary of the Department of
24 Interior and the BLM is the agency where they end up
25 going in terms of these executive orders. As I said, PLO
26 5150 is kind of key to that and so, it will depend on
27 where they want to go with public land order 5150. And
28 we don't have any direction on that yet. I don't have
29 direction on any of these on the public land order, on
30 Ambler or around central Yukon, you know, I've just
31 provided options basically for them. You know, if this
32 is your goal, this is a way to get there. But, you know,
33 we're still kind of in the beginning phases of the
34 conversation trying to understand what their goal is.
35 Is that helpful? Member, Gervais.

36
37 (Simultaneous speech)

38
39 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, that answers my
40 question...

41
42 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That answer [sic]
43 your question?

44 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And then I had
47 Robert with one question then be Tommy. Did you have one
48 question, Robert?

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50

1 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes,
2 I did, but seemed like Geoff has answered that about the
3 Ambler Road. That was my question about Ambler Road.
4 What's going to happen now since we have a new president
5 here with that's going to -- working with opening the
6 oil and everything is to -- and I'm -- you're going to
7 be leaving today Geoff? And this could be the last time
8 you're going to be -- this the last meeting -- this the
9 last time you're going to be meeting with us?

10
11 MR. BEYERSDORF: It's probably the last
12 time that I will meet with this Council. Yes.

13
14 MR. WALKER: Well, how many years?

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16 MR. BEYERSDORF: 25.

17
18 MR. WALKER: 25 years. God, I was a young
19 guy. So are you.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Are you retiring?

22
23 MR. WALKER: Yeah. Well, I wish you all
24 the best, Geoff. I wish you everything -- I've -- all
25 the things that we have done together. I think we did a
26 lot to really do a lot for the tribal people and I thank
27 you for all that work that you've done for us. That
28 makes us -- you know, I'm going to go back and tell the
29 other guys that are still alive. Hey, Geoff finally
30 retired, I'm going to tell. They gonna [sic] say what?
31 That's what they used to say, again. Mr. Beyersdorf,
32 thank you for all your work.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, Tommy had a
35 question. Go ahead. Tommy.

36
37 MR. KRISKA: Oh, yeah, I was I don't
38 know, a lot of things. I was running through my mind in
39 different ways. I know they're after minerals, and I
40 don't know how far the minerals is from the ocean, the
41 coast. And why can't -- if they want those minerals so
42 bad, they're probably going to run through around Red
43 Dog Mine wherever those roads go and build a road out
44 to the ocean and barge everything all the way around the
45 other way and leave our country alone. I don't know.
46 Just ideas.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And then Pollock
49 had a comment. Go ahead, Pollock. Did you raise your
50 hand?

1

2 MR. SIMON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The
3 past president and administration has started the hard
4 road for (indiscernible). Now, this new president and
5 new administration and possibly the hard road will go
6 through. But it has some concerns. And the people from
7 (indiscernible). We have no more salmon, no more chum
8 salmon, no king salmon and low number of moose and the
9 caribou hasn't returned and that's a concern. The people
10 are afraid about the development of the whole road. The
11 past (indiscernible) said it would be for commercial
12 industrial use only. But now, with the new
13 administration, that road could be open to the public.
14 And people are concerned back home about flocks of people
15 coming up to the road, not only to look at the mountains,
16 but trap, hunt and fish in the area where there's always
17 already low number of whitefish and (indiscernible)
18 also. (Indiscernible) the people back home in Allakaket,
19 Thank you.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you,
22 Pollock. I'll comment on the Ambler Road aspect. If the
23 PLO is lifted or the approval of the Ambler Road, there's
24 still the Doyon and the Nana are not on Board. They've
25 not opened the road corridor and so they have not
26 actually -- there the final -- will be the final say on
27 whether that road is actually completed, because the
28 road has to cross some Doyon land. And so, they -- Doyon
29 and Nana have retracted their support of the Ambler Road,
30 and even Nana did and so that's not a given that that
31 road is going to be built well tomorrow -- until they
32 deal with the Native lands also. And in a sense, this
33 may be the last time we see Geoff before this Council.
34 In his professional life I do want to say that Geoff was
35 Subsistence coordinator down at Koyukuk Nowitna, worked
36 with BLM, with this Council and through his other jobs.
37 He's always worked very well and had very good
38 understanding of this Council and the rural lifeways,
39 having lived in Galena and stuff like that. So, I really
40 appreciated you -- all of the work you've done. And I
41 wanted to state that on the record that we highly
42 appreciated your quality of work with this Council and
43 always informative and to the point and so I -- short
44 and sweet and I appreciate that. So, thanks so much --
45 my -- you got a seat at my table anytime you happen to
46 be wandering up the road again. And so that'll be my
47 final comment. And so go ahead, Don. One more final.

48

49 MR. HONEA: Yeah, Mr. Chair, thank you.
50 Geoff, as a personal favor, I appreciate in the late 90s

1 to build -- to be able to harvest my -- harvest some for
2 my health, for my home. And with your position and, you
3 know, we go back to the 90s and stuff like that. So
4 grateful to have your friendship all these years and
5 hey, we'll probably see you down the road. I don't think
6 you're old enough to retire, Thank you.

7

8 MR. BEYERSDORF: Through the Chair. Could
9 I address both Pollock and member Kriska?

10

11 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes. Please do.

12

13 MR. BEYERSDORF: So, member Kriska, in
14 the supplemental environmental impact statement that we
15 did for Ambler, we did look at that alternative route
16 that you're talking about. One thing, I guess I wanted
17 to note is that what we found there is that there would
18 actually be more salmon stream crossings and then, you
19 know, with the potential for a road that way the impacts
20 to Caribou habitat Jim Dau from -- retired from ADF&G
21 provided some critical information in regards to what
22 that might look like. So that was incorporated. That's
23 why we didn't look at that route at that time just to
24 be aware. And then to member Pollock I wanted to thank
25 you. We did incorporate extensive information in regards
26 to caribou and sheefish and salmon and I know that some
27 of my staff spent considerable time in Allakaket and
28 Alatna visiting with some of your elders to get that
29 information, which was then incorporated into that
30 supplemental EIS as part of that decision. So, thank you
31 for that. And then, you know, just on a personal note I
32 want to go around the table just a little bit. You know,
33 member, Kriska, I've always appreciated your getting out
34 there, getting on the ground you know, with your wolf
35 hunting, etc. I know that you spent a considerable amount
36 of time with Benedict Jones and that, you know, I think
37 you saw him as a mentor and I also I've appreciated it
38 in these years, as Benedict is maturing in age that
39 you've been looking out for him. Because I just kind of
40 kept in touch over the years, and I know that you've
41 been doing that. And so, I want to say thank you for
42 that, to member Simon, for 6 or 7 years I ended up
43 running the, the Nowitna check station, and so I was
44 never able to go out moose hunting and yet, every single
45 fall, I would come home and there would be moose in my
46 freezer and it's because your son did that. And I wanted
47 to say thank you for that, for raising him that way.
48 Jenny -- Member Pelkola, you invited me into your Fish
49 camp. You allowed me to bring our assistant secretary
50 into your fish camp to learn about your lifestyle and

1 your culture. I've never forgotten that trip and I would
2 say on Saturday nights, having the privilege to sit
3 around and play cards with you and listen to your stories
4 and make my belly hurt because I was laughing so much
5 has always meant a lot to me. Member Reakoff, Chairman
6 Reakoff you and I have shared bread together, sat around
7 a kitchen table and talked about big picture issues and
8 providing your input into how we might address that.
9 Thank you for that. Member Walker, Robert, there's a
10 couple of things that really stand out in my mind. One
11 of them was when we were going through the H1N1 bird flu
12 and I flew into your village and I brought fruit, and
13 there were kids lined up out the door. It was like
14 Christmas, and your wife made me like an herb pillow to
15 help with my dreams and such, thank you for that. In
16 addition to that, you and your cousin Jimmy and I got
17 to go on a -- we took a flight, and you re-educated me
18 on where the moose and 21E were going, which then started
19 the interagency Fish and Game, Fish and Wildlife and
20 Park Service Collaring Project that we did, which indeed
21 showed your indigenous knowledge was true. Moose were
22 migrating a lot farther than we had thought and we ended
23 up utilizing that as a platform because your wife was a
24 schoolteacher, to be able to teach the kids not only
25 about kind of the Western science, but about indigenous
26 knowledge, and then being able to -- the kids that did
27 really well at the end of that year, we ended up taking
28 them on a flight to go -- actually go out and track
29 their moose. Member Honea my first relationship with you
30 was a little bit embarrassing because I had started at
31 the at the Nowitna check station, and I was out cutting
32 firewood to get ready for that year. And it turns out
33 your dad shows up, and I was cutting firewood on your
34 dad's allotment. And I've never -- I've always -- I was
35 embarrassed about that. Your dad was very gracious about
36 that, and I know you and I go back 20 some years as
37 well. So, I think the thing that I want to emphasize
38 here, because there's a lot of people behind me that
39 some of them have extensive time in their agencies,
40 organizations, and some of them are kind of coming in
41 new. All of that is to speak to the importance of the
42 relationships. I was blessed enough to have spent 16 of
43 my 35-year career in villages, and with many of you, and
44 getting to know many of you, and it's that, that has led
45 to the success of the relationship that we have had and
46 I just want to underscore to others that having
47 relationships with you is important because it helps us
48 to understand what your issues, concerns are and to be
49 able to reflect and be able to carry them forward. So,
50 thank you very much for your time over the last 25 years.

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1 Hopefully our paths cross again in the future.
2 Blessings.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, my final
5 comment on the Ambler Road is that there are four
6 options. One was a railroad that went from Ambler,
7 basically the upstream of the Ambler River, across the
8 Kobuk River, with one large river crossing to the base
9 of the Seward Peninsula went to Port Darby, which is in
10 Norton Sound, which is an 80ft deep port for large ships.
11 It was 286-mile railroad. The railroad could haul
12 natural gas to mine the mineral and Ambler and take the
13 mineral back to the coast. That option has never been
14 discussed, because that -- there was -- the state of
15 Alaska has been fixated on a road. That option should
16 have been in the forefront, and I've said that over and
17 over. That is the most accurate -- and that's what the
18 industry wanted 15 years ago, because I read it in a
19 magazine, out of resource magazine and the pocket in an
20 Alaska Airlines flight, flying down to the Federal
21 Subsistence Board. That's what the industry wanted. They
22 wanted a railroad to the coast, you know, now they're
23 going to have to ship the mineral all the way across
24 Alaska, all the way down to Seward, when they can make
25 the shortcut right to the Ocean Park. Arby's open right
26 now. Norton Sound is open. So, there's really no reason
27 not to. I would encourage the BLM to remind the current
28 -- new administration, the new Secretary of Interior and
29 the presidential process, that that was the most viable
30 option. That was the cheapest, because you don't have
31 to maintain the roadbed. I mean, you don't have to plow
32 snow all winter. You don't -- there's a whole bunch of
33 pluses about that. Bringing the -- there's a lot of
34 energy consumption. It brings -- the liquefied natural
35 gas could be used to mine the mineral. I would encourage
36 the BLM to remind the Secretary of Interior, that's what
37 the industry originally wanted. The state of Alaska got
38 involved with the road idea and they couldn't get off
39 the road. The paradigm but, the railroad was the most
40 viable aspect of transporting mineral to the coast that
41 would not impact the rest of the interior of Alaska. So
42 that's my final statement on that issue. Thank you, Jeff,
43 and appreciate that. So, I think it's time to go to
44 lunch. And so, some people ate lunch and so let's see
45 what time we got here. A quarter after 12. What time
46 should we come back, Nissa. About quarter after one. Can
47 you eat -- Can people get lunch in an hour? An hour and
48 a half? No, I'm -- I've been drinking coffee. I'm wound.
49 So, okay, we'll come back at 1:45 is an hour and a half
50 right now. So, 1:45 but I want prompt. We got we got a

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1 lot of agenda. Everybody has to be seated at one -- I
2 don't know you're all kind of on your own, yeah.

3

4 (Off record)

5

6 (On record)

7

8 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we're back by
9 the mic here. Are you there, Tim? Are you back on the
10 line?

11

12 MR. GERVAIS: Yes, I am.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Tim Gervais. Say
15 again.

16

17 MR. GERVAIS: Yes, Jack. I'm here.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Tim is there.
20 We're gonna [sic] come back on the record and Pollock,
21 he was around. Oh, he did go back out. So -- but we do
22 have a lot of agenda to go today. So, Pollock will come
23 back in. We're gonna [sic] be back on record after lunch.
24 I got what, is it? 1:50 p.m. So, we did our -- let's
25 see. Where are we at here? So, we're public members,
26 Tribal Council training, proposed changes?

27

28 MS. PILCHER: Yes.

29

30 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And so, that's
31 Brian.

32

33 MR. UBELAKER: Right here.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, there you are.
36 I got the sun on my card here, let me turn it slightly.
37 That's all right. I just -- getting the light straight
38 off that card there. So, let's see. Oh, Tommy, we're
39 looking for Tommy. I thought he was here. Does anybody
40 know what happened to Tommy? Nissa.

41

42 MS. PILCHER: I think him and Darrell
43 were planning on flip flopping at the Watershed meeting,
44 so. I think Darrell is supposed to be here, and Tommy
45 is supposed to be there. I just did message Darrell to
46 find out where Darrell is.

47

48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, I didn't know
49 that Tommy was going.

50

1 MS. PILCHER: We do have -- we still do
2 have quorum.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. So, that
5 would've been good if Tommy was here, Darrell, one of
6 them. So, we should continue, though, because we don't
7 -- can't wait all day. So, you have your PowerPoint
8 there? Go ahead, Brian.

9
10 MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
11 the record, Brian Ubelaker, wildlife biologist with OSM.
12 Are we good? Okay. Good morning, Mr. Chair and Council
13 members. We are currently in the open period for wildlife
14 proposals. This call for proposals closes April 4th of
15 2025. So, for the 2025 Winter Council training, I'm gonna
16 [sic] briefly cover proposing changes to Federal
17 Subsistence hunting and trapping regulations.

18
19 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa Pilcher, for
20 the record. This is also found on page one of your
21 Supplemental Material Packet.

22
23 MR. UBELAKER: Okay. There are two ways
24 in which you can change Federal Subsistence regulations.
25 First, is via Special Action Request, and the second is
26 by proposal during the open period. Key difference
27 between these two is that Special Actions are for
28 temporary short-term changes, and can be submitted at
29 any time, whereas a proposal changes codified
30 regulations and can only be submitted during the open
31 period. And since we are currently in that open period
32 for wildlife proposals, I'm gonna [sic] walk through the
33 proposal submittal process. If the Council would like
34 to submit a proposal, all we need is for one of you to
35 make a motion and have a vote to submit the proposal on
36 record and OSM staff will draft it up to submit and this
37 can happen at any time during this meeting. Any member
38 of the public can also submit a proposal as well, and
39 this would occur via either standard mail to our office
40 in Anchorage. You can hand a written proposal to me or
41 any other OSM staff during this meeting, or you can
42 submit it through the regulations.gov website. I
43 probably should've started this off with we're gonna
44 [sic] breeze through this pretty quick. I think you're
45 all pretty familiar. If there are questions afterward
46 though, definitely answer them.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, that's fine.

49
50

1 MR. UBELAKER: Proposals must include --
2 when the public submits a proposal, please make sure to
3 include who is submitting the proposal with your contact
4 information, what regulations you want changed, and in
5 which Unit they apply to, what you would want the
6 regulation to say and why you want to change it. Any
7 supporting information that you can include with it
8 would help the Board to evaluate it. Next one. Sometimes
9 a submitted proposal may be invalidated. This is because
10 they pertain to things that are outside of the Board's
11 jurisdiction. Examples are, if there are requests to
12 change anything to do with halibut, that's out of the
13 Board's purview. Marine mammals, migratory birds, and
14 non-Federal lands all fall into that category as well.
15 Next. For reference, the subsistence regulations that
16 can be changed through regulatory proposals are found
17 in the Code of Federal Regulations, subpart C and D.
18 Next. These cover a wide variety of regulations from
19 general, such as sealing requirements and definitions
20 to more specific regulations like harvest limits,
21 seasons, permit requirements, and customary and
22 traditional use determinations. As I said, brief. Thank
23 you. That is the end of the presentation. And please
24 remember, we are currently in an open period for
25 proposals, and they need to be submitted by April 4th.
26 If you have any questions or would like to see some
27 examples of past proposals and regulation changes, we
28 can help you out with that. Thank you.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, earlier I got
31 -- I was in the middle of plowing a lot of snow. Like,
32 there's -- didn't you have a couple of issues that we
33 may address at this meeting for proposals?

34
35 MR. UBELAKER: Yes, there was a list of
36 those, and did you want to get into those now?

37
38 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Don.

39
40 MR: HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I had
41 a quick question. Okay, you said by April 4th we should
42 have -- are you talking about, like, hunting and fishing
43 proposals for next year to be submitted to you guys by
44 April 4th?

45
46 MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Chair. Yes, it
47 is the -- currently, it's the open call for wildlife
48 proposals to change hunting and trapping regulations.
49 And that period is open until April 4th, and that will
50 change for the 26-28 regulatory seasons.

1

2

MR. HONEA: Oh, that -- okay. Mr. Chair, through the Chair. I just think (indiscernible) that's really fast. I didn't realize that we had to have them in so -- if it's beyond that date, then it's not considered or...?

7

8

MR. UBELAKER: If there is an emergency situation that you would need to have looked at, you can submit a Special Action Request, which can be analyzed at any time. But the typical Wildlife Proposal process takes about a year. So, we call for the proposals right now, we get all the proposals entered, and then I, as an analyst, write the analysis for these. And through the review process and all the different levels that we send it through, it takes about a year to get the analysis finalized and presented to the Board.

18

19

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, any other questions, comments about proposals? Does any of the Council members understand how this process works? Go ahead, Robert.

24

25

26

27

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is only for Federal land, right?

28

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31

MR. UBELAKER: This is for proposals to change Federal hunting and trapping regulations, yes.

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MR. UBELAKER: We actually do. We had some pretty deep discussions with the solicitor and Justin, our new regulation specialist. What we came up with is no, this -- there's not a proposal that you can enter for the management strategy. You -- Nissa maybe can correct me if I'm wrong, but you can advise and you can develop the strategy and get it in as part of your Annual Report and then put it in for -- before the Board in that way. But it wouldn't be through the proposal process.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: The objective of
3 the strategy is that the Federal managers continuously
4 change -- it's a flux staff, and it's gonna [sic] get
5 even more convoluted as time goes on, as staff comes on.
6 We would like to stop having to say the same things over
7 and over and over. This is what (indiscernible). This
8 is how they have to be managed. You know, under the
9 Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission, we
10 have a hunting plan, recommendations. We have a book of
11 all these various, basically management strategies of
12 how park resources are gonna [sic] be managed. If --
13 then we should submit an idea to the Federal Subsistence
14 Board that this is -- that within this region, they
15 should contemplate that this aspect or this issue that
16 they should have discuss. But I would like to have it
17 submitted at this meeting for the wildlife, cause it's
18 a wildlife issue. How they would initiate that so that,
19 you know, the agencies -- this is the template of how
20 we're going to manage in this region, BLM, U.S. Fish and
21 Wildlife, Park Service. This is the template of how we're
22 gonna [sic] manage sheep. I was talking about a survey
23 methodology with Arctic Refuge just at break here.
24 There's specifics and I said that's in the management
25 strategy. Get the management strategy out and read it
26 again, has to do with continuity and a bunch of
27 biological -- staying within biological parameters. So,
28 I would like either through a letter to the Federal
29 Subsistence Board how to initiate this management
30 strategy position of the Council for our region and how
31 the Board is going to have this as a -- endorse it. So,
32 the Federal Subsistence Board has endorsed the Koyukuk
33 River Moose Management Plan. They've endorsed the Bison
34 Management Plan for the Innoko, they've -- the Board has
35 endorsed various planning processes and strategies. So,
36 this is a strategy that this Council is making, and we
37 have probably more authority than a lot of other entities
38 that are coming up with planning processes and how I
39 would like either it now or not right this second. But
40 sometime during this meeting, I would like OSM to develop
41 a response on how we're going to approach the Board with
42 having a management strategy, which we've worked on
43 extensively, as you know, and before the Federal
44 Subsistence Board so that's the way the dall sheep are
45 managed in this region. So, you don't have to answer the
46 question right now. I'm just asking you, do you know,
47 or do you have a way (indiscernible) it's not on the
48 list and so, how are we gonna [sic] get it on the list?
49 Let's put it on the list. Customary traditional weren't
50 on that list either, customary traditional uses weren't

1 on that list either. But the Council has talked
2 extensively about being on that list, being involved in
3 how the customary and traditional use determinations
4 were determined. So, that's a question out there.
5 That's, putting that out there right now Brian, you got
6 a statement or comment or. So, you're in a quandary
7 right now because there is no such thing. Well, we want
8 that to be before the Board. Do we put that into our --
9 another hunting plan recommendation or our --
10 correction, our annual report topic, which that's not
11 the question. It's not a -- it's something that we've
12 telegraphed to the Federal Subsistence Board that we're
13 making this sheep management strategy. Now we -- how do
14 we get it for this region? That's the question. They
15 endorsed it for the Wood Bison Plan in our region, for
16 the ANILCA. They endorsed the plan in our region. How
17 did they do that and how are they going to address this
18 Sheep Management Plan? So, that's a question, I want OSM
19 to tell us before the end of this meeting so that we can
20 enter that into the record. That's what I would like.
21 You have a comment there, Don.

22
23 MR. HONEA: Oh, yeah, I have a comment.
24 Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is really good information.
25 To me because I -- you know, I didn't really know the
26 process of submitting these because sometimes we have
27 like Eastern Interior and Western Interior are kinda
28 [sic] merged at the Novi River there and we have like -
29 - oh what do you call it? We support each other because
30 we're that close, Tanana and Ruby, to making
31 measurements for that. So, if I had you know, a like
32 concern that Eastern Interior and we supported each
33 other because we utilize the Novi River quite a bit
34 there. That their proposal, that they submit, or we
35 submit, if we didn't do it by April 4th, would have to
36 wait for a year. So, I'm really glad to know the process
37 of this, because I guess I did not know that the ones
38 we submitted in the past went protocol went to OSM. And
39 so, it's actually good to know how these are formed,
40 know how these are submitted. Thank you.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: It's good to review
43 that, how this process actually works and the division
44 of where it applies to, the Federal lands versus State,
45 etcetera. That was excellent. Robert.

46
47 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Brian,
48 you know, right now I think we're looking at probably
49 what Game proposals? And I think when we have our RAC
50 meeting in October that's our fishing proposals, right?

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1 Or just -- it's just either or anytime we need to do it,
2 right?

3

4 MR. UBELAKER: No, we're -- through the
5 Chair, sorry. We are currently in the wildlife open call
6 for proposals so, they get submitted this time around,
7 and then the fall meeting coming up in 2025 will present
8 the RAC versions of our analyses to you to get, to kinda
9 [sic] inform you on which direction we're heading and
10 get your input on what we're doing with that. Before we
11 send it to the Board in April of 2026.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, Robert, you
14 were here on this Regional Council when we addressed
15 Fish and Wildlife simultaneously and the Board met on
16 those mixed proposals at meetings. Several years ago,
17 they divided them out. So, one year is wildlife cycle,
18 the next year is fishery cycle. So, we're -- we've just
19 come out of the fishery cycle now we're moving to the
20 wildlife cycle. Now it's the time to submit the
21 proposals. The fall meeting will discuss those
22 proposals, then all the proposals that come before this,
23 in this region were crossovers, and then we'll make comm
24 -- we'll make a recommendations on those. So, you
25 remember back in the old days when we did both at the
26 same time. So, I -- so that's -- we're on the -- at this
27 point we're gonna [sic] be talking about submitting any
28 proposals. If there's proposals, this is when we talk
29 about submitting those. So.....

30

31 MR. WALKER: Okay, thank you for that
32 information. It's been a while. So, thank you, Jack.
33 Thank you, Brian.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And Tommy's back
36 again. Let the record reflect. And so, we're talking
37 about how the process of submitting wildlife proposals
38 on Federal public lands and Brian just went over an
39 overview of how that works. So, but I -- I'm asking
40 because this is a wildlife proposal window. I'm asking
41 the Federal Subsistence Board and OSM to develop a
42 response to the Western Interior Council of how the
43 Western Interior Regional Advisory Council's Dall Sheep
44 Management Strategy will be endorsed by the Federal
45 Subsistence Board. For the record, for the agencies
46 that are managing dall sheep in this region. They did
47 it in our region for bison. They've done it in our region
48 for the Koyukuk Moose Management Plan. Those are all
49 within this region, those -- the Board adopted
50 management plans within our region before. So, we need

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1 to know how - okay that was a state process or a Federal
2 process. How does the Council process fit into that, the
3 Board endorsing management strategy. That's the
4 question. So, Liz and everybody here can -- Brian can
5 figure out what -- Brian.

6

7 MR. UBELAKER: I do have an answer to
8 that question.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, you got one.
11 Okay, good.

12

13 MR. UBELAKER: Yeah. So, we had -- from
14 our discussion on the sheep management strategy, we had
15 two possible outcomes, and you can do one or either or
16 both. So, OSM can also facilitate getting the sheep
17 guidelines to the Board through the Council's annual
18 resort report process. The Council can request the Board
19 do one or both of the following. Option one is to direct
20 OSM to use the sheep guidelines while forming future
21 analyses evaluating relevant proposals and or number two
22 requests that the Board draft correspondence to relevant
23 DOI land managers and or apartment -- the Alaska
24 Department of Fish and Game requesting that a
25 cooperative working group be formed to address the
26 guidelines, perhaps with the intent of creating a
27 management plan out of that. So, there's two options.
28 You would -- you have it drafted; you would include it
29 in your annual report and then you would ask the Board
30 to do one of two things. And so, basically what we can
31 do is you submit the plan, if you just wanted to stay
32 in-house and apply to this region only. Anytime I draft
33 an analysis having to do with sheep manage -- or sheep
34 harvest, I will take that management strategy and use
35 it as part of the analysis. Or you can ask the Board to
36 draft correspondence to other agencies to get everybody
37 on board with what the management strategy is asking
38 for. We'd have to do that because OSM does not have --
39 we can't tell BLM how to manage or how to survey for
40 sheep. We don't have that regulatory. It's not part of
41 OSM's or the Board's purview, I guess.

42

43 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, I feel there
44 should be a blend, you know, the Federal Subsistence
45 Board can adopt the management strategy, you use it in-
46 house. But it also should be recognized because the Board
47 members who are these Federal Board members anyways,
48 they're the land management, I've met several of the
49 BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, National Park Service and
50 Forest Service. Forest service doesn't have that many

1 sheep, they're mostly goats. But they do have some sheep,
2 a few, but those land managing agencies should have --
3 as Board members should endorse the management strategy
4 as far as on our -- within our region. So, I think that
5 there could be a blend. I do feel that it should be
6 always used in house but should be suggested for the
7 other land managing agencies. And so, with the National
8 Park Service we're working on -- in April, the end of
9 April, we're gonna [sic] be over at Ambler. We're gonna
10 [sic] be talking about that management strategy and how
11 it's gonna [sic] be made into a hunting plan
12 recommendation, and how sheep are gonna [sic] be looked
13 at and surveyed and etcetera, within the gates of the
14 Arctic National Parks. With the other agencies, the
15 Board is made up of the other agencies. That's what it
16 is. So, I think that there can be a blend. And so, I
17 would -- my response would be that there should be a
18 blend. The OSM always uses the management strategy, and
19 the other agencies should look strongly to it. Arctic
20 Refuge and the other agencies should be looking strongly
21 to that management within this region. This is how the
22 - cause [sic] we get new people all the time and people
23 got all kinds of ideas about how sheep -- what happens
24 with dall sheep, but the reality is they don't really
25 understand the ecology. And there's not a lot of
26 schooling on the ecology of when dall sheep are doing
27 various things. There's a lot of TEK in that thing. It's
28 like, oh, that's not science, no, it is traditional. Ask
29 George back there with TEK has got -- actually got --
30 will reflect scientific investigation. The lynx don't
31 migrate, they told me that for years. Well, come to find
32 out if you put a GPS collar on them, we got lynx that
33 were in the Brooks Range that are down in northern
34 British Columbia. They do migrate. TEK said they
35 migrated and now they -well the science -- if you don't
36 have science, your scientific data, there's a whole
37 bunch of scientific data that's lacking in the current
38 sheep management. A composition of the ram component is
39 completely lacking in current management, that has to
40 be an -- so, if you got -- if you're surveying moose,
41 you got eight structures of the moose, you're looking
42 at stuff like that. The management strategy is talking
43 about how to scientifically manage the sheep. So, I think
44 that there should be a blend. And I think that this
45 Council can write a letter to OSM and to the Federal
46 Subsistence Board that states that we feel that there
47 should be a methodology in place, like the authorities
48 of this Council is to develop management strategies and
49 how does that enter? We have a management authority under
50 the Title Eight 805 ANILCA that we can make management

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1 strategies and how do we submit those? It's a glitch in
2 OSM is what it is. So, you need to fix.....

3

4 MS. GREDIAGIN: Mr. Chair.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes. That's sounds
7 like Lisa. Go ahead, Lisa.

8

9 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, this is Lisa
10 Grediagin, Wildlife Division supervisor with OSM. And I
11 just wanted to point out that in section 805(c) of
12 ANILCA, it specifies that the secretary, meaning the
13 Board, shall consider the report of the Regional
14 Advisory Councils concerning the take of Fish and
15 Wildlife. And so, that report they're referring to is
16 the Annual Report, which includes the harvest management
17 strategy. And so, I mean, the Board already, you know,
18 should be considering the harvest management strategy.
19 You know, it's in statute that they need to consider the
20 Council's reports and associated, you know, management
21 strategies when they're considering the take of Fish and
22 Wildlife. And also, I mean, with like the endorsement
23 of, say, the 40 Forty-mile Caribou Management Plan or
24 the Western Arctic Caribou Management Plan, the Board
25 endorses it. But that doesn't mean they're necessarily
26 tied to it when they're making decisions. I mean, just
27 because they endorse a plan doesn't mean they have to
28 follow it exactly to a T. But I mean, generally they do
29 so, I mean, I think unless the Council wants to make
30 significant changes to the strategy they've already
31 submitted as part of their Annual Report. I mean, like
32 Brian said, OSM will consider that harvest strategy
33 whenever we're analyzing proposals concerning sheep in
34 the Western Interior Region. And then obviously the
35 Council will do the same when you're delivering
36 proposals and recommending them to the Board. And then
37 the Board also per statute will have to consider that
38 when they're deliberating on proposals for the take of
39 you know, sheep in the West Interior Region. So, I guess
40 I'm not clear you know, beyond that, you know what
41 you're.....

42

43 (Simultaneous speech)

44

45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well.....

46

47 MS. GREDIAGIN: What you're seeking.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I wanted to make
50 perfectly crystal clear is that the management strategy

1 will be swept under the rug, and the next -- in five
2 years, nobody will know anything about it. That's what
3 happens. I've been here a long time I see stuff happen.
4 The Board endorses a management plan, they said bull-
5 cow ratios for the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, the
6 Koyukuk River Moose Management Plan, their specific
7 biological parameters that are in those plans and those
8 analysis are revolving around those management
9 objectives. That's not like they're endorse it and don't
10 pay any attention to it. If there's a problem with those
11 populations, they're gonna [sic] look heavily at those
12 management plans and are we staying within the
13 biological parameters. So, they're just not lost in the
14 shuffle. The Board's endorsed these various plans and
15 they basically are -- or should be adhering to them in
16 the analysis. I do feel that it's very important for
17 option one minimum to be used for the management strategy
18 that OSM uses in the analysis, but I don't want it swept
19 under the rug, lost in the shuffle along the way.

20
21 So, somebody's talking off mic there
22 that's your how. But, anyways, I want OSM to think again
23 about this. How do you know - where -- we got a
24 management strategy; we want that before used in the
25 process. We also want the agencies to stop reinventing
26 the wheel, I get a whole other administration with some
27 refuge. And so, then we have to reinvent the -- we have
28 to go back over it again. Well, this gets lost over
29 time. It should be some more to the forefront. This is
30 a management strategy for dall sheep, this is in the
31 Western Interiors realm and so, that should be embedded
32 into our -- into this region, into our -- how this shape
33 is managed. We do the same thing with moose on Koyukuk.
34 We do the same thing with other areas where we have
35 management strategies or management plans. So, option
36 one is a real viable thing, that's a given, as far as
37 I'm concerned. Option -- your option one, that's a given.
38 But I do feel that the other agencies should be --
39 understand if OSM is reviewing and making an analysis
40 that they should also notify the affected Federal land
41 managers. This is our management strategy and this is
42 the way we're going on that. So, when you're gone
43 (indiscernible) this stuff does not change. This is --
44 we're talking nature here. We're talking science and
45 nature. This stuff doesn't go away with politics or
46 anything. So, at this point we're going to have to take
47 a position. Since we've spent all this time on this one.
48 I would like the Council to make a motion to submit this
49 sheep management strategy to -- as a -- to the Federal
50 Subsistence Board to be part of our documentation, to

1 be utilized by OSM and in the future and for future
2 analysis for dall sheep within our region as part of our
3 -- part of the process for analysis and that's exactly
4 what you, what you're endorsing. So, the -- which was
5 referred to as option one, so, we'll go with option one.
6 But I do feel that the -- it should be also an addendum
7 to that, that if you're -- if OSM is analyzing a proposal
8 and it affects certain Federal lands that they wouldn't
9 be in contact with those other Federal land managers
10 about how this is the way this Council feels strongly
11 about dall sheep management and what's wrong with that.
12 That's just part of what you're gonna [sic] be doing
13 anyway, isn't it, Brian?

14
15 MR. UBELAKER: Yes. I mean, when I write
16 a sheep analysis, when you submit a proposal regarding
17 sheep, I will take the Sheep Management Strategy and put
18 that in, as part of my analysis. And that goes out for
19 team field review, which is our second step of reviews,
20 and all affected land management agencies get to read
21 it over and have a say in the direction that we're
22 heading, just as same as you guys do when we present it
23 to you at the fall RAC meeting.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. I don't have
26 a lot of confidence in the Statewide planning group
27 thing, that just fell apart. I wasted a bunch -- I wasted
28 two years of my life with it, Dall sheep management
29 planning process for the State, it fell completely flat.
30 Where they even got Israelis and Arabs to agree on ibex,
31 they could not get anybody to agree on the Dall Sheep
32 Plan. So, I don't know, I have no faith in the -- in
33 that kind of a planning process. So, we'll go with that.
34 We're gonna [sic] go for option one with the
35 understanding that it's gonna [sic] be used throughout
36 the -- through the analysis and the other agencies that
37 have land managers are also involved in the whole -- in
38 that process for that analysis. Is that clear for the
39 record. So, motion by Robert. Do we have a second?

40
41 MS. PELKOLA: Second.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Jenny.
44 Any further discussion? Don.

45
46 MR. HONEA: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
47 Under discussion so, would this be part of our Annual
48 Report submitted to have those -- to have that request?

49
50

1 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa Pilcher for
2 the Chair. So, you guys do have that already in your
3 Annual Report. It is an action item a little further
4 down. So, what you guys are gonna [sic] do when we get
5 there, it's agenda item 12D is -- what we -- we can
6 reference this conversation about adding additional
7 language into what is already in existence on that motion
8 that you just made and the conversation that Jack just
9 had and then we can -- I can add it into the current
10 annual report because it's already in there, it's just
11 not.....

12
13 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Fresh on our minds.
14 I wouldn't want to pass this motion now so that when we
15 get to that, we just paste it in. So, just paste right
16 in. So, that when we get to that Annual Report topic.
17 You're right, we do have it on the Annual Report. We
18 just gotta [sic] -- we're gonna [sic] add to it.

19
20 MR. HONEA: Okay I would just like the
21 wording on that motion. What exactly is that motion?

22
23 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Motion is that the
24 OSM is presented there -- they had a discussion. They
25 had two options one was a public, wider process where
26 they get a whole bunch of people involved. And the other
27 first option was that the management strategy would be
28 used for doing analysis. When OSM is doing an analysis,
29 it would be in the forefront for this region, and we're
30 making an addendum to that, that they would be heavily
31 -- work with the agencies and if they don't have the
32 management strategy at that time, they give it to the
33 agency who doesn't have the manage - cause [sic] I was
34 handing it out to Arctic Refuge, they didn't have it. I
35 sent, -- we sent it out, when? April of 23. They didn't
36 have it. So, I had to give it again back to -- I keep
37 having to give it to these various -- they should have
38 it in their portfolio. So, that's the motion. The motion
39 is to go with OSM to option one that it's gonna [sic] -
40 - the strategy will be used in their management -- at
41 their analysis and that they use the other agencies and
42 involve the other agencies with the understanding that
43 this is what this region would like, how dall sheep
44 should be managed. So, that's clear Don?

45
46 MR. HONEA: Yeah.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, any further
49 discussion? Questions called, those in favor of that
50 motion signify by saying aye.

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IN UNISON: Aye

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

(No response)

Motion passes. That'll be added on to our -- in our discussion on the annual report. So, thank you, I appreciate that, Brian and being out in front of me on that one with the two options. Good job, again. And so, now we're -- call for proposal, which is action item A call for Federal Wildlife proposals. Brian.

MR. GERVAIS: Jack.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, go ahead, Tim. Oh, go ahead, Tim. Go right ahead.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Brian, so, looking at your PowerPoint and you have a slide about why may a proposal be invalid and you got marine mammals, migratory birds, fishing in marine waters. When I look at section 801.5 in ANILCA and it talks about the national interest in the proper regulation, protection and conservation of fish and wildlife on public lands in Alaska and the continuation of the opportunity for subsistence way of life by residents of rural Alaska require that administrative structure be established for the purpose of enabling rural residents who have personal knowledge of local conditions and requirements, to make a meaningful role in the management of fish and wildlife, and of subsistence uses on public land. So, if this proposal process restricts or makes it invalid for us to have proposals like, I know this is a game cycle, but let's just -- I wanted to use fish for right now. Why if ANILCAs saying that there has to be an administrative structure available and then the proposal process is saying that we can't talk about certain topics like marine mammal, migratory birds, or fishing, commercial fishing in the EEZ then what's the solution? How do we meet the requirements of ANILCA and still have proposals that can be invalidated based on jurisdiction, when you have migratory species, such as fish that are swimming through multiple jurisdictions. But they are keystone subsistence resources.

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, that's your
2 question? Can you answer that question?

3
4 MR. GERVAIS: My question is, it's ANILCA
5 grants, and administrative structure be established and
6 then this particular -- like the proposal process is
7 kind of the bread and butter of our management ability
8 with the RACs. But then the PowerPoint is saying we're
9 not allowed to make proposals on these certain topics.
10 So, I'm asking, how do we address these invalid topics
11 if they affect our keystone subsistence species
12 resources?

13
14 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Nissa, you're
15 gonna [sic] answer to that?

16
17 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa Pilcher, for
18 the record. I think the short answer that you're looking
19 for, Tim, is the way that the Council can address it is
20 through correspondence. Since that you can't -- there's
21 no regulatory process for this Board with the Federal
22 Subsistence Board. You're -- basically the only answer
23 is correspondence, and we can certainly do that.

24
25 MR. GERVAIS: Okay. I would like to
26 comment, if I may, Mr. Chair. That correspondence is not
27 a meaningful role in management of fish and wildlife,
28 when it can just be ignored by ADF&G or the Commissioner
29 of ADF&G or the North Pacific Management Council or
30 whoever the respective agency may be. So, I would like
31 to get past this situation where people are saying that
32 we don't have authority to have any meaningful role in
33 management because it's a migratory species and it's out
34 of our jurisdiction. I think what this ANILCA 801.5 is
35 saying is that Congress is requiring an administrative
36 structure be established for meaningful role in
37 management of fish and wildlife, and that correspondence
38 does not meet that means and we have a biologic [sic]
39 crisis on our hands because of that.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, it's a
42 jurisdictional restriction. This Council can deal with
43 Fish and Wildlife. We can write to the Federal
44 Subsistence Board. We can tell the Federal Subsistence
45 Board that we need to do this or that, and they can move
46 that up the chain to, into the Interior Department to
47 deal with, you know, marine mammals or whatever issues
48 that we can't deal with that was on the list. But we
49 have the administrative structure for a meaningful role,
50 that's the Council process, that's the Federal

1 Subsistence Board process, the expanded Board with
2 additional public members, that's, you know, that's the
3 meaningful role part. But then we get into
4 jurisdictional boundaries where we can't talk about
5 migratory birds because there's a migratory bird
6 Council, that's their authority. And so, this getting
7 into the EEZ, we're, you know, North Pacific Fisheries
8 is gonna [sic] be here to talk to us tonight. That's --
9 you know, we've made so many waves with the Federal
10 Subsistence Board process that they're actually
11 responding to these letters and things that we've
12 written. But we don't -- this Council does not have a
13 seat on the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council.
14 That's a different realm. But I'm really super happy to
15 have North Pacific here to talk to us this evening at
16 6:30 p.m. So, but yeah, I feel your frustration, but you
17 know, we got a marine crash, we've got too many -- you
18 know, if it was up to me, we'd just, like, pull about
19 50% of the hatchery release. We would, you know, try to
20 stay off of the passage of fish moving out of the South
21 Alaska Peninsula and protections in the Bering Sea for
22 our salmon to move into the Yukon and Kuskokwim River.
23 But that's -- I can't do all that. We can't do that; we
24 don't have authority to do that and the other Boards,
25 everybody just got their own idea how this is gonna
26 [sic] go. Eventually it will go the right way, but it's
27 gonna [sic] have to go to like zero and then back all
28 the way out. They'll -- their hatcheries will crash.
29 That's what's gonna [sic] happen to them. So, then
30 they're gonna [sic] have a -- then they're going to be
31 -- they'll have us come to the plate and actually start
32 using real science again. This has always happened. They
33 wiped out bison and now we're trying to get them back
34 again. This happened over and over and over in American
35 history. They push beyond the -- it's all for economics.
36 First, they sold all the buffalo hides, then they just
37 ground up all the bones into phosphorus. And it's just
38 -- this is what America does, and they always forget how
39 that, these are finite resources and there's not an
40 unending supply. This has happened over so many times,
41 but we can't do anything and we're doing as much as we
42 can. And I'm happy we got North Pacific Fisheries
43 Management Council coming to see us. So, I'll just leave
44 it right there. We can't just keep going on that. I do
45 appreciate your comment on that though Tim. You had a
46 comment there Robert, go ahead.

47

48 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Brian,
49 with all this conversation that we're having here, is
50 that Federal proposals and all this and I see it on the

1 bottom down here, the State proposals. What would happen
2 if, let's say, the Anvik tribe or the West Interior RAC
3 put a proposal in to declare all the fish, chum salmon,
4 chinook salmon as a extinct fish, in a proposal of what
5 would happen here. I mean, would that say that since
6 there's no more fish up the Anvik River, how do we do
7 that? Do we just say, well, we're just gonna [sic] fish
8 'till [sic] we get the last one, or it's gonna [sic] be
9 the fish to the last (indiscernible) bycatch or, you
10 know, something like that. Who declares in that proposal
11 to declare a disaster or extinction for the chinook
12 salmon or both species?

13
14 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Robert, I'll
15 answer that one. You do just what -- you go ahead and
16 answer. I can answer it, or you can answer it. Why don't
17 you take your.....

18
19 MR. UBELAKER: I'll defer to you, Mr.
20 Chair.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: You're asking for
23 an endangered species or threatened species status,
24 which you'd have to submit that to NOAA. That's under
25 that's what's going on right now with chinook. They --
26 somebody submitted that the south Alaska coast is
27 endangered. What about the Yukon? They forgot the Yukon
28 on that one. But the reality is the -- so the NOAA is
29 going through an endangered species analysis for chinook
30 salmon and that's who deals with that. OSM, Federal
31 Subsistence Management is on Federal public lands and
32 of associated waters. That's what we're -- that's where
33 we're at. So, the jurisdiction your tribe could submit
34 a proposal that chum salmon on the Anvik River are
35 becoming extinct, and we want them under threatened
36 species status, and they might start to do something,
37 the North Pacific Fisheries management. But it's still
38 under analysis, they're probably not gonna [sic] go for
39 it. I don't know, especially now. Political climates
40 changed now, as is the weather. So, go ahead, Robert.

41
42 MR. GERVAIS: Well, I got a comment about
43 something you said that is relevant.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Tim. Well, Tim
46 is.....

47
48 MR. GERVAIS: I'll be brief. So, they
49 didn't, NOAA didn't forget to put Yukon River or
50 Kuskokwim River salmon in the ESA. What NOAA's position

1 is, is that's outside of their jurisdiction. So, they
2 need to talk about it. They'll need to think about it.
3 They'll need to do anything about it. And that's the
4 whole problem, is we're gonna [sic] hear it tonight.
5 Everything we say to North Pacific counts or the like
6 Dr. Stram, the main staff member that's dealt with this
7 chinook issue for decades. She said in 2009, in the
8 rulemaking meeting for amendment 51, she said that her
9 working as NOAA, they did zero analysis of the in-river
10 population level of chinook salmon. So, somehow, we need
11 to break the stalemate and stop this deal where oh,
12 that's out of our jurisdiction, that doesn't matter, or
13 we don't have to account for that because the fish are
14 migratory. Because what's happened is the resource has
15 been destroyed. The fishing culture on these rivers is
16 destroyed. And we just -- we have to develop different
17 management structures that protect the species and
18 protect the subsistence users. And I mean, it's -- we're
19 just gonna [sic] hear it. I can tell you what's gonna
20 [sic] happen tonight is they're gonna [sic] say, oh,
21 it's out of our jurisdiction and everybody's gonna [sic]
22 to go home and would come back next time and they'll say
23 the same thing. And meanwhile the salmon stocks continue
24 to be deteriorated, and we don't meet subsistence needs
25 and we don't have viable stocks.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks, Tim.
28 Tonight the meeting is about -- tonight the meeting is
29 not about, you know, it's about the options for chum
30 salmon management on the Bering Sea. That's what the
31 meeting is about tonight. So, Robert, you have a comment?
32 Go ahead.

33
34 MR. WALKER: Yes. The reason why I asked
35 that question was because the Anvik River used to have
36 between 8 and 1,500 chinook salmon spawn every year, and
37 the last three years there haven't been one chinook
38 salmon come back. So, we're looking at how many other
39 side streams in the lower Yukon and (indiscernible) the
40 Middle Yukon that don't have any salmon come back
41 anymore. So, that's something that -- where we're gonna
42 [sic] go and how long will it take to get there, seems
43 like we're not doing anything about it. We're just kind
44 of like talking about it and talking about it and NOAA
45 whoever they are, they're not gonna [sic] do anything.
46 Not as far as I can remember, they never even talked
47 about how these small streams and everything. And like
48 I said earlier about this, Doug Lang declaring the Yukon
49 River a seven-year moratorium and there's no more
50 chinook salmon going up these side streams? How are we

1 gonna [sic] do that? They'll never come back the chinook
2 salmon to Anvik River because they're all gone. The
3 species has been wiped out.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Alright. I mean,
6 all we're hearing in this room is the extreme frustration
7 that the people who live on the land are just -- we're
8 just frustrated to no end that this is getting to this
9 point where we can't stop the powers that be that keep
10 raping the oceans and we can't stop it. And so, we're
11 like, we're just standing there on the other side of a
12 fence watching bad things happen to the -- to this
13 resource. But we can't just keep belaboring this. We've
14 gotta [sic] move on in this agenda. I mean, we're just
15 gonna [sic] keep going in circles. So, we're up for,
16 call for proposals. And so, Brian we're gonna [sic] start
17 talking about call for proposal.

18
19 MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
20 do have a little blurb for that too. So, I'll spit that
21 out and then we can start talking about the good stuff.
22 Once again for the record, still Brian Ubelaker OSM. Now
23 is the call for wildlife proposals and the Council's
24 opportunity to submit proposals to change Federal
25 Subsistence Wildlife Harvest regulations. An
26 informational flyer on how to submit a proposal to change
27 Federal Subsistence regulations can be found on page
28 asterisks-asterisks of your meeting book. I did not fill
29 in that blank, and I apologize, it's in your book
30 somewhere. As we mentioned during the training, Councils
31 must make a motion and vote to submit proposals. Also,
32 the opportunity for Councils to submit proposals is
33 available during this entire meeting. If a Council
34 member thinks of a proposal later or in response to
35 another agenda item, they are welcome to suggest
36 submitting a proposal then. Of course, anyone can submit
37 a proposal as an individual before the submission window
38 closes. That is the end of the blurb, Mr. Chair. I'd be
39 happy to answer any questions or have more discussion
40 on the topic.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Any Council
43 comments?

44
45 (No response)

46
47 So, no. So, you had some ideas about
48 alignment with some previous actions taken by Boards.
49 Go ahead, Brian.

1 MR. UBELAKER: Okay. Thank you, Mr.
2 Chair. So, my supervisor, Lisa Grediagin, keeps a
3 running tally throughout the year. Things that have
4 changed by Board of game actions and whatnot. So, we
5 have a couple - Nissa emailed you that list of them,
6 correct?

7
8 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I got that list. I
9 was plowing snow. You don't understand how busy I was,
10 and I couldn't -- I looked at it, it sounded good, but
11 I wanted to talk about it at the meeting so, I turned
12 off my brain on that one, and now I've turned my brain
13 back on. So, now it's the time to talk about it.

14
15 MR. UBELAKER: Okay, let me -- Nissa, do
16 you have that email handy?

17
18 MS. PILCHER: I do. Nissa Pilcher, for
19 the record. The first one is Unit 19, and I did just
20 turn off the projector. I might need to turn it back on
21 again. It's to revise or eliminate the Upper Kuskokwim
22 controlled use area. The rationale is, as it exists now.
23 So, this is to revise or eliminate it in Federal
24 regulations because as it exists now, there is no Federal
25 land within that current controlled use area boundary.

26
27 MR. UBELAKER: I will modify that
28 statement a bit. There is Federal public land, but it
29 is not open to subsistence it is Native or State
30 selected. But I guess a brief history and if you can get
31 the map up -- brief history is 2000 and the 90s, maybe
32 the State established the CUA. They expanded it
33 experimentally, two different stages and when it
34 expanded to its largest size, the Federal regulations
35 adopted it. And then like two years later, the -- on the
36 State side, the CUA shrunk to two miles to either side
37 of several of the rivers, whereas in Federal regulations
38 it remained humongous. It did cover a little bit. It
39 does currently cover BLM land down at the southern end
40 of it. But for the most part inside the State boundaries,
41 there is no subsistence, no Federal lands open to
42 subsistence uses.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: It's my
45 understanding the State Board has eliminated this
46 controlled use area now.

47
48 MR. UBELAKER: No, they didn't eliminate
49 it, and I dug into a little bit of the Board of Game
50 history, they expanded it. So, it was two miles on either

1 side of the rivers as it sits right now. They expanded
2 it for whatever reason, and then they expanded it again
3 for whatever reason. That's when the feds adopted it.
4 And then a year or two later, the Board of Game didn't
5 make any more adjustments to it, and it reverted to its
6 original state, which is two miles on either side of the
7 river.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: It's not
10 reflecting that in the game -- in the book here.

11
12 MR. UBELAKER: Federal side, that is the
13 controlled use area on the Federal side. If you look
14 in.....

15
16 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: This is the old,
17 controlled use area.

18
19 MR. UBELAKER: No, that's the current
20 Federal control use area.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I mean, the current
23 Board of Game controlled use area is much smaller than
24 this one.

25
26 MR. UBELAKER: Yeah, and if Nissa can get
27 the map up, we -- oh, there we go.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah.

30
31 MR. UBELAKER: You can see it. The blue
32 outline is the current Fish and Game, the current State
33 controlled use area and the reddish-brown hashed area
34 is the Federal controlled use area.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we can submit
37 the proposal -- this proposal, the idea of this and then
38 we can discuss it further at our fall meeting after it's
39 been analyzed with our -- we need to get comments from
40 people around McGrath and so forth. And so, I would
41 prefer to get this in as a proposal basically for
42 discussion. So, I would -- is it okay for the Council
43 to submit this proposal if -- to eliminate the old,
44 controlled use area size back down to what is currently
45 reflected in blue as the States so that we can discuss
46 it at our fall meeting. Yes.

47
48 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair, thank you. Is this
49 -- could you tell me who submitted this and the purpose
50 of it? I mean, is it within our books here?

1

2 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We would be
3 submitting this proposal because currently in the
4 Federal Regulation Book that we have right now, this is
5 basically outdated. We were -- the State Federal
6 Subsistence Board was staying with what the State --
7 it's on the screen there, what the State actually had
8 at times. But when it was this last -- was it the March
9 Board cycle that they -- of 24, were they reduced that
10 controlled use area which what Board meeting reduced it?

11

12 MR. UBELAKER: Like 2008. It was a long
13 time ago.

14

15 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, a long, long
16 time ago.

17

18 MR. UBELAKER: Long, long time. Like I
19 say it, they -- for whatever reason and I couldn't find
20 the -- and I didn't listen to the transcripts, but they
21 kept expanding and expanding it, and I guess it didn't
22 do what they wanted it to do and then they stopped caring
23 and it reverted back to what you see there.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: A lot of it had to
26 do with, they had a predator control project going on
27 there, and it was -- that was part of the -- what are
28 they -- it had an acronym that they used for that area.
29 That had a lot to do with that. So, we can submit a
30 proposal to revert back to, you know, basically
31 eliminate the old control use area boundaries, which
32 then it goes into it's all State land, at that point.
33 It's not really doing anything, but I do wanna [sic] get
34 comments from the local people. We'll submit the
35 proposal, and if Kevin Whitworth or somebody down there
36 in McGrath goes, no, we want to do this, well, we'll go
37 along with the local. But we need to get it out as a
38 placeholder. We need to get it into the -- go ahead.

39

40 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair. I guess that's
41 why I was asking the question. If it was submitted a
42 while back, was it from somebody in McGrath? And so, we
43 are just supporting this? I mean, if you -- so this is
44 gonna [sic] be coming up in the fall meeting, then.

45

46 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: If we make a
47 proposal, if we get a motion and a proposal to submit
48 this as a proposal, then it will come up in our fall
49 meeting. Nissa, you don't wanna [sic] answer the
50 question?

1

2 MS. PILCHER: I can give it a shot. So,
3 this is Nissa, for the record. So, right now the Federal
4 regulations are more restrictive than the State
5 regulations and they also don't match which creates user
6 not conflict, but confusion. So, right now you guys are
7 talking about if you want to submit a federal proposal
8 to reduce the size of the Federal controlled use area
9 down to match what the State has and Jack did lodge the
10 concern that you, there's no Kuskokwim members on the
11 Council. So, what I can make sure that I do is if you
12 guys do choose to submit this, I can relay it to the
13 contacts I have on the Kuskokwim and let them know you
14 submitted it. But you're fully aware that you did it
15 without input. Because there's no Council members from
16 that area and if they have concerns to please let me or
17 anyone on the Council know so we can get them logged for
18 the fall meeting and go from there. So, if you want to
19 go forward with the proposal, like Jack said, you'd need
20 a motion and a second to align the State and the Federal
21 regulations cause currently the Federal regulations are
22 more restrictive than State.

23

24 MR. UBELAKER: Mr. Chair, and to add on
25 to Nissa's Statement, one major important fact that I
26 forgot to mention is that having the controlled use area
27 on the balance that it exists right now only applies to
28 federally qualified Subsistence users. It does not apply
29 to State users as they have to go with the blue area.
30 So, everything that's over in the Federal regulations
31 doesn't restrict anybody from using it. If that makes
32 sense.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right. So, like
35 this type of a proposal is what I would refer to as
36 housekeeping cause [sic] it aligns with State. So,
37 there's less confusion. I don't see where there's a
38 conflict. I don't think that it's gonna [sic] be a big
39 issue. But I do wanna [sic] get the proposal on clean
40 up these regulations. So, there's not a lot of confusion
41 and what I want to get the comments. So, when the
42 proposal comes out in the summer or whenever it comes
43 out, then the -- then McGrath and people can talk about
44 it and then we know where we're gonna [sic] proceed from
45 then. But this is the way to get the issue on the table.
46 So, the Chair will entertain a motion to submit this
47 proposal, to realign with State current control use
48 Upper Kuskokwim control use area in the blue as referred
49 to on the mapping on the screen there. And so, we need
50 a motion. Do we have a motion?

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MR. HONEA: I move.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Motion by Don. We have a second?

MR. KRISKA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Tommy. Further discussion.

MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes. Go ahead, Don.

MR. HONEA: Yeah, okay. Under discussion I really don't understand this. I mean, okay so, do we know when it was submitted, who it was submitted by the purpose of it? I mean, I love reinforcing this, but are -- do they still want it? I mean, are we going past our or, we're just supporting them?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Brian, did you have an answer to that?

MR. UBELAKER: Through the Chair. Member Honea. This idea -- nothing has been submitted officially yet. This idea came from my supervisor, who keeps track of changes this Board of Game makes and notices differences in State and Federal regulations. And she just put a list together -- she keeps a running list throughout the year, and this is just one that she noticed where Federal and State regulations do not match. We're trying to bring them into alignment so that there's no confusion -- less confusion for users in the field.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: And I do believe that a lot of those questions will be answered if you guys do choose to submit this, in the analysis. Because Brian sitting right, there is gonna [sic] have to do a lot of work on the who's and the what's like you've been asking, so.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, this will go through an analysis where that'll get presented in our fall meeting. We'll get comments, we'll call up Kevin or somebody in McGrath or -- and we'll get comments about this particular proposal, they will probably go

1 whatever, we don't care, or they'll have problems with
2 it, and then we will vote accordingly. But we need to
3 address this issue. We have to have it in a proposal
4 form. So, I have a motion and a second on the floor. Do
5 we have any further discussion. Question is called.
6 Those in favor of submitting that proposal to the Federal
7 Subsistence Board process signify by saying aye.

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IN UNISON: Aye.

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whatever, we don't care, or they'll have problems with it, and then we will vote accordingly. But we need to address this issue. We have to have it in a proposal form. So, I have a motion and a second on the floor. Do we have any further discussion. Question is called. Those in favor of submitting that proposal to the Federal Subsistence Board process signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign. So, there's one other, is it -- go ahead, Brian or Nissa, do you have the ideas before you there?

MR. UBELAKER: I've got an email pulled up. So, the second one that I have that was on the list is in Units 24D and 21D of opening a Federal muskox season, which the State has on the books for a year or two now. So, once again Federal and State regulations do not align. Federal regulations are more restrictive than State, currently.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, that -- aligning with that would be beneficial to Subsistence users to align with the State current -- is it coming up on the screen now? So, it would be to open Federal muskox season in concurrence with State -- current State Game regulations as of established in 2021. And so, they voted against an ANS. But there's apparently a harvestable surplus of Muskox and the Board of Game has that season, and we should have that also under Federal regulations. So, that's in the near area there, dead center in your area there Tommy. So, I feel that we should submit this proposal to make it legal under Federal Subsistence regulations, also. Would you like to make that motion?

MR. KRISKA: So, moved.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Moved by Tommy. Do we have a second?

MS. PELKOLA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Jenny. So, that basically aligns State and Federal regulations on Federal public lands. Further discussion? We'll be also discussing this at our fall meeting. It'll be a proposal. Questions called. Those in favor of that motion signify by saying aye.

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IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign. So, I.....

MS. GREDIAGIN: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Go ahead, Lisa.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, Lisa Grediagin, for the record. I just wanted to clarify that those muskox hunts under State regulations in Unit 21 and 24 are draw permit hunts. So, could you clarify whether your intent is for the Federal hunts to also be by draw, permit or, you know, any sort of permit or just open?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: My intention was to align with the State regulations so that there's not confusion. There's not a lot of muskox in those Units. So, it can't be a full-on season. You know, everybody go get one muskox that would be too much, especially cows. And so, I would, at this time, I would become more comfortable with staying with the State draw permit. That's what I would be more comfortable with.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Okay. I mean, yeah, we - - I guess we can work it out in the analysis cause Federal users can't, you know, use a state draw permit. We've -- they've used State registration permits for Federal hunts, but I don't think there's ever been a case of a -- you know, we've had separate, you know, draw permits. So, I guess yeah, you could either clarify now or we'll work it out as a modification in the analysis.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, I understand that you cannot use State draw permits, but you can issue Federal registration permits, right?

MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, we have Federal registration permits, or we also have Federal draw permit hunts as well.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I would be more comfortable with a federal draw if that's the case, cause.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Okay, yep.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: If they cannot use the State draw permit, then they could have a federal draw permit. I'm not sure how that would play out in the analysis about, you know, how that's gonna [sic] work as far as how many of those draw permits there's going to be. So, I would be -- and I appreciate you bringing that to light and I didn't realize that you could not use a state draw permit, but you can use a registration permit and if there's Federal registration permits. So, I would -- that should be part of the proposal that it's for an open season concurrent with whatever the State has, but also with the Federal limited draw permit. Which there's areas in Alaska where there's Federal muskox lottery draw permits. So, thanks for clarifying that and so, that -- actually we need to vote. Okay. Yeah, we can vote. Those in favor of submitting that proposals.

MS. PILCHER: So, there was a vote, but.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, we need to amend -- we need to retract. What we need to do is retract that vote and amend the motion and then revote it. That's what we were supposed to do. So, with that coming to light and that additional language being needed to be put there. The Chair will entertain a motion to retract that last vote and make a motion to retract that last vote. So that we can add additional language to that proposal.

MR. KRISKA: I make a motion to retract that.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And Jenny was the second. Do you concur, Jenny?

MS. PELKOLA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And so, retraction now adding the language. To have the -- it's a draw permit a Federal draw permit for muskox in Unit 24D and 21D, and with a concurrent season to the State season. So, that's clear for the record. So, further discussion to that, the motion is still up, still on the floor. Completely new. Okay, you're right, right, right. So, the motion is retracted. So, at this point, Tommy can make a motion to adopt.....

MR. GERVAIS: (Indiscernible)

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Say that again. Is that you, Tim?

MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. We never voted on the retraction. Just got a second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. I'm getting way off. I need more coffee. So, okay, we're gonna [sic] vote on the retraction of the motion. Motion by Tommy, seconded by Jenny. Those in favor of retraction signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

Opposed same sign. So, new motion on the table. So, the motion -- you can resubmit a new motion, Tommy, to align the State and Federal hunts on Unit 24D and 21D on Federal public lands with a lottery draw permit. Federal -- with a federal lottery draw permit for muskox. So, that's your -- that -- you can make that motion.

MR. KRISKA: So, moved.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Moved by Tommy.

MS. PELKOLA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Jenny. So, now we're back where we're supposed to be with the additional language, with the clarification for the lottery draw permit. So, any further discussion? Questions called, those in favor of the new motion signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed? Tim's an affirmative on that one.

UNIDENTIFIED: (Indiscernible).

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right. You're exactly right, my mistake. So now, does anyone in this Council have other issues that should be submitted a Federal Subsistence proposal at this time for wildlife within our region. So, I don't have any proposals myself.

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, go ahead. You
2 got another one there.

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4 MR. UBELAKER: Mr. Chair, I've got two
5 more.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, you got two
8 more.

9
10 MR. UBELAKER: I really wanna [sic] get
11 down to it. Number three on the list is the 24A, 26B
12 sheep closure. The special action that was codified in
13 the last regulatory cycle is due to sunset at the end
14 of 2025.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, I will discuss
17 that. And so, we -- we've had the closure. The closure
18 will go through 2026. So, we -- the closure was to
19 restrain the public from killing off the last remaining
20 rams and to get the population to develop a healthy pop
21 [sic] -- more healthy breeding, retain the breeding
22 population. So, now we're -- our sheep population is
23 responding to the closures. We're starting to -- the
24 last survey information that I've -- that was -- I was
25 given by Brad Wendling and the National Park Services,
26 that we had 40 lambs per 100 ewes to the east of the
27 road, and we had 41 lambs per 100 ewes to the -- ewe
28 likes to the west of the road. So, our sheep management
29 strategy has been working, our sheep closure has been
30 working. And one more fall and then I think we can open
31 back up with normal Federal Subsistence regulations for
32 harvest again. Which we had in 21A and 21B was one ram,
33 one ram in 24A and one ram, seven eights, I think in
34 26B. The State will then revert to their normal harvest
35 of full curl. We have a proposal before the State Board
36 of Game to eliminate eight-year count. And so, the State
37 Board of Game will be visiting that, the proposal to
38 eliminate eight-year-old count at their March meeting.
39 So, hopefully they adopt that because that's been a big
40 problem. Hunters cannot identify eight years old at a
41 distance, and they can't even hardly identify them in
42 their hand. And so, the State Board of Game needs to
43 address that issue. But right now, the population is
44 coming back around to where I feel that we can open up
45 for subsistence harvest and the State regulations and
46 in 2000 -- after 2026, so 2026 is the end of the closure
47 period. So, I don't feel that we need to submit a
48 proposal for an extension of the -- and we'll let it
49 sunset. Is that okay with the Council, my line of thought
50 on that?

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MR. WALKER: Yeah, I'm good with closing.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: No, we don't want to close it anymore. It's already under, it's under closure right now and that closure will go through 2026, next year.

MR. WALKER: It'll go through next year?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go through next year.

MR. WALKER: Because I thought it was -- we're bringing it up.

MR. PILCHER: Mic.

MR. WALKER: Sorry. I misunderstood what Brian was saying to me. It was like we're bringing it up now so we can have that for 2026. And that's why I made that motion, to have it continue closed.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, the current sheep closure was adopted by the Federal Subsistence Board in July of 2022. We had two years of closure. Then we had another proposal last April before the Federal Subsistence Board. The Federal Subsistence Board adopted the -- an additional two-year closure, and that was by the Western Interior Council's Proposal. But at this point, with the sheep population responding to our management restrictions, we've -- I feel that there will be enough resources for subsistence and non-subsistence harvest. If -- especially if the State eliminates the eight-year-old count. But at this time, I don't feel that the Council should try to submit another extension to the closure. That -- I don't feel that it's necessary. Yeah.

MR. WALKER: Just like I said, I wasn't here in 22, so this was.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So right now, we don't -- the question was, do we want to extend the closure beyond 2026? And my response is I don't think we do need to, and we do not need to submit a proposal. So, that's my response. I live in Unit 24A, and we have C&T in 26B. So, I'm watching the sheep population. We've gotten some older rams back. I've seen rams breeding ewes. So, where everything's getting a lot better, and

1 the closure was very instrumental and the kind of
2 recoveries that we're having. So, another issue we had
3 four, Brian. Oh, Tom, you have a comment?

4

5

6 MR. KRISKA: Yeah, Mr. Chair. So,
7 actually, essentially what we're doing is, we're
8 reversing that or lifting that ban. Is that all we're
9 doing?

10

11 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're letting it
12 sunset. It would basically be in place for four years
13 straight, and then we're just gonna [sic] let it fall
14 out. So, we'll just let it sunset. So, number four. Go
15 ahead, Brian.

16

17 MR. UBELAKER: Number four. Before I dig
18 in, member Walker, I apologize. I did say the closure
19 went through 2025; Chairman Reakoff was correct. It goes
20 through 2026. I was doing some mental math, and it came
21 out wrong. Okay, then last, number four proposal. So,
22 this one, I hope it's not too confusing. This one is
23 gonna [sic] hinge on Board of Game action at their
24 upcoming Statewide meeting in March. There's a proposal
25 to change the boundary between 21D and 21E. It's a Board
26 of Game Proposal 119. If the Board of Game adopts that,
27 it's gonna [sic] misalign Federal and State regulations.
28 So, we're thinking that we can -- you can submit a -- I
29 don't know what, preliminary proposal that if the Board
30 of Game does adopt this boundary change, your proposal
31 will be analyzed, and then State and Federal regulations
32 will remain aligned. If they don't adopt it, you know,
33 you can have the motion, or the proposal withdrawn.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. You got a
36 comment there, Robert.

37

38 MR. WALKER: Brian, do you have a map of
39 this, bigger so we can take a look at it, where the
40 changes are gonna [sic] be? Cause I'm familiar with 21E
41 and 21D.

42

43 MR. UBELAKER: Through the Chair. Nissa
44 is on that. That's why we keep Nissa around.

45

46 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: One of the many
47 reasons we keep Nissa around. Nissa is pulling up a map
48 there for that change. And so, I -- did the GASH Advisory
49 discusses this issue, do you know? And so, I would like
50 to know what the Advisory Committees have been talking

1 about on this one. Go ahead, Nissa.

2

3 MS. PILCHER: I do know that the GASH AC
4 did try to meet, and they were weathered out, and I
5 don't believe it happened. But they could've met before.
6 If I find the map, I'll see if I can find if they were
7 able to meet.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: But I do think that
10 Brian's right, that we could submit a proposal to align
11 the boundary change, if the Board of Game does choose
12 to change the boundary and it will be in place. And if
13 GASH AC is fine with it, everybody's cool with it, then
14 we won't have confusion about different Unit boundaries
15 of 21D and 21E but, we need to have a placeholder for
16 it. So, you have a comment there, Don?

17

18 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, to
19 make it kinda clear here, I mean, we -- this is just a
20 preliminary hearing on this. And actually, when -- at
21 our fall meetings, we'll go ahead and I mean, I -- it's
22 good to know what, that we're going through them. So,
23 on our own time we could find out, study them, etcetera.
24 Thank you.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, Don it'll --
27 if we submit a proposal to concurrent proposal for the
28 same boundaries, the Board of Game, the Board of Game
29 adopts it, if they adopt it. Then we have the opportunity
30 to discuss that with our constituency at our fall
31 meeting. We would know what the GASH Advisory Committee
32 is -- actually wants. And so, then we can change it but
33 if we don't do anything, then we're gonna [sic] have a
34 complete misalignment of the State and Federal
35 regulation boundary and that's gonna [sic] be really a
36 challenge for people.

37

38 MR. HONEA: So, I guess what I'm saying
39 right now is -- I guess what I'm saying right now is
40 this is action items that we are taking a stance on.

41

42 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, it's an issue
43 that Brian's bringing up that there's gonna [sic] be a
44 misalignment if the Board passes the regulation. So, we
45 need to, instead of waiting for one whole Board cycle,
46 Federal cycle, two more years, we should have that in
47 the hopper. Then we can talk about it at -- the State
48 Board is gonna [sic] meet on that in March. By October
49 of this next year, whenever we have our next meeting,
50 then we'll know what they did, and we can move forward

1 with that. But it's just what referred to as a
2 placeholder proposal is what that's referred to. Oh,
3 Nissa has got it up now. So, you got a comment there,
4 Tommy? Go ahead.

5
6 MR. KRISKA: Yes, this is -- Mr. Chair,
7 this is Tom. Anyway, this proposal is with our ACs in
8 Middle Yukon Advisory, we oppose this because the -- due
9 to the fact that the people at Kaltag and a lot of
10 people, they do own what -- allotments down there, in
11 that area. And you're going over -- you're gonna [sic]
12 put the boundary line above those allotments, which is
13 -- they're already allotments meant for the people of
14 Kaltag that live there. The grayling moved to the Yukon
15 from the Holikachuk in 1959. And so, it's just a new
16 thing and the people in the past from Kaltag and those
17 places were living around that area. So, we opposed it
18 because the people -- I don't know how it will work with
19 people already owning land in that district. So, the
20 Middle Yukon Advisory opposed that, and I will oppose
21 it, too. Thank you.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Well, that's
24 super important because we didn't have that information.
25 That's why we're discussing these things before we even
26 make these proposals. So, that's why I want to know what
27 the Advisory Committees are doing, and what was the
28 original reason why the Board of Games even entertaining
29 this, change.....

30
31 MR. KRISKA: I have another comment. So,
32 I think on behalf of some people from down there, it was
33 this personal use in a way that maybe they have a license
34 and stuff. They would be better off getting a license
35 to do what they want this area for. Sorry to say, but,
36 anyway, I'm just wanted say that. Thank you.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. And you have
39 a comment there, Nissa, go ahead.

40
41 MS. PILCHER: Yeah, my comment -- is
42 Nissa Pilcher, for the record. So, it was the GASH AC
43 that did submit it. Fish and Game is opposed to it, I
44 didn't read exactly why Middle Yukon is opposed to it.
45 The few times that I did deal with boundary issues when
46 I did work for the Board of Game, they like the ACs to
47 come to an agreement if a boundary is going to be
48 changed. So, take that as you will.

49
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1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, oh, go ahead
2 there, Robert.

3
4 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
5 Talking with the Tribal Council from Grayling, I haven't
6 met with the president or chief there, and they appeal
7 -- opposed it also. But they weren't too sure on why
8 they wanted to add to it. Nobody did really give them
9 information on why, I mean, just like this upper, the
10 26D here where Kaltag, Nulato and Koyukuk are too. You
11 know, it just kind of like we're gonna [sic] do this and
12 that's it. And when I asked, as a -- I said, as a RAC
13 member and I asked as a chief to the AC Board in 21E, I
14 didn't get -- nobody never gave me an answer. It was
15 just like, we're doing this and bye, so I'm just kind
16 of like sitting in the middle with everybody else. But
17 I would have to say no too, because, if they say I have
18 to support the other people, and I have to support the
19 Grayling Chief and their tribal Council. Thank you, Mr.
20 Chair.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, this -- because
23 the Council's under Title Eight 805 are to look to the
24 advisory committees, that's part of our process. And so,
25 when we have two divided advisory committees within our
26 region, Middle Yukon and GASH is doing something else,
27 I don't really want to get in the middle of that. So,
28 at this point I'm getting more inclined to just not
29 submit a proposal like we're endorsing one side or the
30 other. And this let the cards fall how they may. And if
31 they really do, if the Board of Game really does pass
32 this change, then we might have to realign that further.
33 But at this point, after this, it was important to have
34 this discussion. I don't think it's a good idea for us
35 to submit a proposal at all, until it's -- the Board of
36 Game has actually sorted it. So, I'm opposed to the --
37 to submitting a proposal now, after your discussion. I
38 did -- that's what I wanted to know, I wanted to know
39 what GASH did and I didn't know that -- I didn't realize
40 you had had a meeting about it. So, go ahead, Tommy.

41
42 MR. KRISKA: Yeah, it -- that was one of
43 the bigger points that I hope Doug was still here. One
44 of the bigger things that came up with the Middle Yukon
45 Advisory for the -- I don't know, it -- someone has a
46 cabin up there, and it was sort of like a personal gain.
47 I shouldn't say that, but just to be truthful, to make
48 sure that you know that this land was owned by the folks
49 that rightfully use it, and I just want to back that up.
50 I don't think I want to move into Huslia area or Galena

1 area or any area like that and say, I want this and just
2 cause [sic] I need to make some money or whatever, I
3 kinda [sic] -- I have to say these things because of
4 (distortion) the people I'm representing, and I want to
5 make it straight there. Thank you.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Tommy.
8 I appreciate your comments, you know, that's what I was
9 asking about. I wanted to know what the Advisory
10 committees were -- I asked, where did this boundary come
11 from? That's -- I had you know, there's really no
12 description, who submitted it. How did they draw this
13 boundary? That was -- those are questions that were
14 coming into my mind.

15
16 MR. KRISKA: Yeah, this came up last year
17 and it was a big, almost upriver against down river for
18 no reason, just for one personal gain. It got stomped
19 all over in the Kaltag and Nulato, Koyukuk meetings, so.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. So, we'll
22 hold off on that one. So, we're not gonna [sic] go
23 anywhere with that. So, Nissa.

24
25 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa, for the
26 record. I would also like to point out that further on
27 down your agenda, under action items, there is Alaska
28 Board of Game Statewide proposals that you guys can
29 choose to take up. If you do want to comment on any of
30 the proposals, including this one that is going before
31 the Board of Game at their March meeting. Not saying you
32 have to, just saying you can.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right. Well, we did
35 submit a Statewide proposal for eliminating age count
36 on dall sheep. We should at least endorse our proposal,
37 if, at the least if the adoption of the proposal. I
38 think it's proposal 95. It should be for -- with at
39 least a five-year sunset, because we're trying to
40 recover these dall sheep population. And if the Board
41 of Game and the State doesn't understand, there are very
42 few sheep that don't reach full curl and a lot of the
43 sublegal sheep are getting killed, that's in the data.
44 And the Arctic Refuge urban back there is -- and the
45 Arctic refuge they had from 1986 to 2012, they have a
46 in-depth composition survey of rams in the Atigun
47 Valley. And it shows when they hit three quarter curl,
48 they start disappearing, that is only human harvest.
49 Those sheep are bulletproof against predation, at that
50 age class. So, it's that if the State doesn't want to

1 read the numbers and they don't do comp work, they don't
2 do age composite, they don't do composition of the ram
3 component, which tells you your age classes. The public
4 -- I'm on Facebook and there's a sheep page, and those
5 hunters can have a sheep laying in front of them and
6 still can't count the ages of them. They get -- I would
7 say between 50% to 80% of hunters advocate people that
8 are sheep hunting advocates or hunting crazy. Guys, they
9 can't age the sheep laying in front of the camera for
10 me to Tommy, let alone 150 yards over there through the
11 rifle scope. There's no way they can do that. So,
12 (indiscernible) I think I see eight rings, it's three-
13 quarter curl, boom. They shoot it. What happens? Oh,
14 walk away. They don't show up in their -- there are
15 ethical hunters that shoot sublegal sheep, and they turn
16 them in, but they're not the majority of those kills.
17 So, I feel that we should submit a comment to our State
18 Proposal 95 that says, they should at least adopt a
19 five-year elimination of counting rings until the sheep
20 population is recovered to carrying capacity. That's
21 what the comment should say. So, they should have at
22 least a five-year moratorium on allowing the public to
23 count rings in sheep for five years and in five more
24 years, the sheep that might have gotten -- never gotten
25 to a full curl who can get shot in five years. Which
26 that's gonna [sic] be a while. Sheep don't drop dead at
27 eight years of age. Sheep routinely get -- in ordinary
28 winter conditions, most rams get between 10 to 12 years
29 of age, and I've seen sheep as old as 15. So, they don't
30 drop dead at eight years of age. It's not like we are
31 gonna [sic] lose them or anything. So, we should comment
32 on that State Proposal 95, which is the Western Interior
33 Council's proposal. And I also submitted an additional
34 one just for good measure to get the Advisory committees
35 in Alaska to discuss that issue. So, I do feel that they
36 -- we should submit a comment endorsing the Proposal 95
37 and whatever the other proposal is, my proposal. And so,
38 they -- that they at least consider taking a five-year
39 moratorium on elimination of eight-year-old count that
40 would allow the sheep population to recover to breeding
41 population and then we would get on the road to getting
42 back to carrying capacity again. Robert.

43
44 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Like
45 I said earlier, I didn't hear about this. You know, I
46 just got back on the RAC Board, but all of a sudden, I
47 got bombarded like 20 phone calls. What is going on down
48 there? What are you doing? Why are you taking our land?
49 Why? It was like whoa, hold on a second here, guys, let
50 me find out what's going on. So, I did find out and I

1 was -- took a stance on I said, I am not on the AC Board,
2 I'm on Federal RAC Board, Western Interior. The only
3 thing we could do is we could say yes or no and that's
4 it. We can't say we support it or we don't support it.
5 That's what I would say, I would say I wouldn't support
6 it anyway because I don't think -- because if we're
7 gonna [sic] start taking boundary lines and changing
8 them, what's gonna [sic] happen after this? Everybody's
9 gonna [sic] just get in the line here and start changing
10 their boundary lines. So, once it starts, it's a domino
11 effect. I think we got to take a stand here and just say
12 no, period.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: You would like the
15 Council to oppose the Unit 21E, 21B boundary? Now which
16 proposal is that? No, no not 95.

17
18 MS. PILCHER: 119.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: 118? 119? You can
21 make a motion to oppose if you want to do that. You're
22 closest to it and so is Tommy. So, we can -- you can
23 make a motion to -- we're talking about State proposals.
24 If you want to oppose Proposal 118, say you make a motion
25 to adopt Proposal 118, and we'll vote it down.

26
27 MR. WALKER: What?

28
29 (Simultaneous speech)

30
31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That's because
32 when you -- yep, if you submit a recommendation that you
33 oppose, that you support -- oppose the proposal. You got
34 to make it in the positive.

35
36 MR. WALKER: Right. Okay, I remember now,
37 that's just my thought. That's just my thought that, you
38 know.....

39
40 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, you make a
41 motion to adopt 118 and we'll vote it down.

42
43 MR. WALKER: Okay. I make a motion to
44 adopt 118.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And that's State
47 Proposal 118.....

48
49 MR. WALKER: State Proposal.
50

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And that's for
2 their whatever -- what meeting is that Nissa?

3
4 MS. PILCHER: It's the Statewide Board
5 of Game. It's proposal 119 on their March 2025 Statewide
6 Board of Gaming.

7
8 MR. WALKER: Okay.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: 119.

11
12 MR. WALKER: 119 I (indiscernible). So,
13 yes, I do. I make a motion to support...

14
15 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: To adopt, proposal
16 119.

17
18 MR. WALKER: Adopt proposal 119 for the
19 boundary change of 21D and 21E.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. We have a
22 second?

23
24 UNIDENTIFIED: Second.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded. We've
27 discussed this proposal extensively and I'm personally
28 I actually proposed to it. So, I intend to oppose the
29 proposal. So, when we come to vote, I'm gonna [sic]
30 oppose the proposal, the motion to adopt. So, any further
31 discussion? (Indiscernible) Oh, Jenny.

32
33 MS. PELKOLA: Question.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, questions
36 called. Those in favor of adopting State Proposal,
37 Statewide Proposal 119, signify by saying aye. Those
38 opposed same sign.

39
40 IN UNISION: Aye.

41
42 So, unanimous, opposition to Proposal
43 119, with the discussion that we had here. So, regarding
44 Statewide Proposal, I think it's 95, and I don't know
45 what the other one is. They're both the same. They should
46 be in the same.....

47
48 MS. PILCHER: Yeah. The proposal you
49 submitted individually was 95. And the proposal that the
50 Western Interior submitted is 96.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: 95 and 96. So we -
- I feel that we should support those proposals, 95 and 96, which say exactly the same thing and that -- then our discussion that the Board should seriously consider if they have consternation about it or they're reluctant to do it, that they should at least adopt it for a five year -- with a time frame to eliminate counting rings for eight-year-old sheep as a criteria. Criteria C for five years with a sunset. Then it would reopen to people, and our population should be healthy enough by then to do that. If it's not, somebody else might submit a proposal to maintain that. So, I feel that a five-year moratorium is reasonable with the condition that the sheep populations are in the state of Alaska, Statewide. So, the Chair will entertain a motion to support Proposals 95 and 96 with the comments to the State Board of Game that they should -- if they're concerned about a permanent elimination of criteria C, counting rings on annuli in dall sheep that they should at least contemplate a five-year elimination and -- for five years with a sunset. So, that would be the comment to the State Board of Game.

MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don.

MR. HONEA: Thank you. Before we -- this is kinda confusing enough. I think to make it easier, you know, and this is not just today. It's been the whole process, every meeting when we come up with these proposals. To me, the confusing part is we're not mentioned, hey the wording on this, what it intends to do and stuff like that. So, it would -- I don't know if it would make it easier for Nissa or somebody to explain what we're doing. Does that make sense? I mean, I don't know if it's the other Board members or it's just myself, but it makes it really hard to try to explain, you know, if you would say Proposal 96, the intent here and this is the wording.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Can you.....

MR. HONEA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Can you put up Proposal 96 on the screen?

1 MS. PILCHER: Yeah, I sure can. And
2 just.....

3
4 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, we discussed
5 this, submitting this proposal back in, it was at our
6 spring meeting. Last year is when we.....

7
8 MR. HONEA: Okay, I.....

9
10 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, she's gonna
11 [sic] put it up again. You prob [sic] -- you may have
12 missed it when we were doing it. I thought, you know.....

13
14 MR. HONEA: Yeah, well, I guess you got
15 to realize I wasn't on the Board at the time, so.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

18
19 MR. HONEA: Yeah, thank you.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: It's good to put
22 it on the screen. So, Nissa is putting it up onto the
23 screen. There's the -- it's the -- repeal the age
24 criteria or definition of full curl for -- oh, excuse
25 me, I got too far back. To repeal the age criteria for
26 definition of full curl ram as follows, and which it
27 gives the three criteria. One is full curl; one is both
28 horns broken, and the other is counting rings, and you
29 got to scroll up to number three there, Nissa so we can
30 see that. So, there it is there. So, number three is at
31 least eight years of age determined by horn growth
32 annuli. That's the problem, most hunters on Facebook
33 cannot count rings on sheep. They don't know what they're
34 looking at. And they're killing some -- killing sheep
35 that are not actually full curl. They're not actually
36 the age class that the department desires. They're
37 actually killing the sublegal recruiting sheep. So,
38 that's what the proposal does. So, there's the proposal
39 right there and what I'm saying is, I would like to
40 entertain a motion to adopt this proposal, 95 and 96.
41 But we also -- I would like the Council to comment that
42 they should at least, if they're not going to oppose it
43 permanently, they should at least think about it, to
44 eliminating age count for at least five years, with a
45 sunset. Does that make clear?

46
47 MR. HONEA: That makes perfect sense. Mr.
48 Chair, I guess I myself, I lean on you to you know, if
49 what your stance is on that because I don't know
50 anything. It's all Greek to me. I mean, if we were

1 talking about moose in 21B or D or C or whatever you
2 know, I would -- so, I think even as a Council member,
3 I just sit here and we -- I myself rely on you know,
4 your support. I mean, what is your view on this, and I
5 appreciate putting that up there because, and explaining
6 it a bit because, I'm not -- you know, I just don't like
7 sitting here and not understanding what the proposal is
8 about. If it's not read or put up there and making a
9 decision on it.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah. You're
12 exactly right.

13
14 MR. HONEA: Thank you.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I -- my fault. I
17 should have had Nissa draw that up and put it on the
18 screen. So, let the record reflect that the proposal
19 submitted by the Western Interior Regional Council is
20 on the screen. So, 95 and 96 are exactly the same
21 proposal and so -- but I do feel that in the comments
22 that we should have the -- if the Board is -- doesn't
23 want to go for permanent elimination of criteria three
24 that they -- determining by age class that they go for
25 at least a five-year closure until the sheep come --
26 return to carrying capacity. They're not -- they're
27 nowhere close to carrying capacity. And so, we need to
28 have -- we still need to have healthy harvest of sheep
29 and eliminate the opportunity of hunters killing younger
30 rams. That's what's happening a lot that's happening,
31 not a little and there's hunting guides that are taking,
32 having to turn in sheep that are sublegal because their
33 -- even assistant guides cannot determine -- they're
34 trying to count rings, and they screw up. So, that's a
35 comment I feel that if we're gonna [sic] comment on
36 Statewide proposals 95 and 96, so. Jenny.

37
38 MS. PELKOLA: Thank you, member Don, for
39 that -- whatever you just said. But I too -- I don't
40 really know about sheep and all that stuff up that way
41 or wherever they are, and that's why we like to have
42 members from different area on our Board so, that they
43 can speak up for their area or, you know -- and let us
44 we learn from that. Thank you.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: It's happened just
47 sitting here in the last hour. Tommy told us all about
48 what his deliberation in the Middle Yukon on that
49 boundary change for 21A and 21E, if we have to have
50 membership. But I live in the northern part of this

1 region. I live in the sheep hills. I'm underneath sheep
2 when I'm trapping wolves, I know where the sheep are at.
3 I know where the wolves are going, I know, I live with
4 them all the time, year-round. There's hunters, oh I
5 know all about sheep. Yeah, you go up in the fall time.
6 You don't know anything about sheep. You don't know where
7 they're going, you haven't the slightest idea what
8 they're doing. I watched -- what drove this, my
9 opposition to that counting rings and when I watch
10 hunters climbing a mountain before the closure, going
11 after three quarter and seven eights' rams, two sheep,
12 two hunters, both with bows, gonna [sic] go kill those
13 sheep. It's like, those were five- and six-year-old
14 rams. That's what showed me that they hadn't the
15 slightest idea what they were looking at and I watched
16 him two days in a row, and they tried to kill -- both
17 days they tried to kill those sheep, but the sheep got
18 away from them. But their intention was to kill them.
19 That's why I -- and the data shows in the Arctic Refuge
20 from 2000 -- or correction 1986 to 2012, there was a
21 sub, three quarter curl ram started disappearing beyond
22 that age class. That's a problem, it's a management
23 problem. So, we should at least comment that they should
24 think about a five-year closure as a final comment on
25 our proposals. So, the Chair will entertain a motion to
26 submit those comments on proposals 95 and 96 to the
27 State Board of Game, Statewide meeting, which is in
28 March. Coming up.

29

MR.HONEA: I make that motion.

31

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Motion by Don. Do
32 we have a second?

33

34

MR.KRISKA: Second.

35

36

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Second by Tommy.
37 Any further discussion? We have a question. Questions
38 called. Those in favor of the proposal, submitting those
39 comments to the Statewide Board of Game meeting on
40 proposals 95 and 96 signify by saying aye.

41

42

IN UNISON: Aye.

43

44

Opposed, same sign. And that's an
45 affirmative for Tim. Opposed, same sign. Motion adopted
46 with those comments, and you register the comments,
47 Nissa and you'll submit those soon. Because I think the
48 comment time is very soon. So, that would be the -- any
49 other proposals, Statewide proposals we -- I don't see
50

1 any that we should -- Do you have any Brian, do you have
2 any Statewide proposals that we should address? So, I
3 think we're good. So, let's see here. Nissa, comment?
4

5 MS. PILCHER: Nissa Pilcher, for the
6 record. I just did want to note you guys did jump ahead
7 an agenda item if people are keeping track on the agenda.
8 So, we ended up just talking about agenda item 12E. So,
9 we did that, but we were under 12A, which I believe you
10 guys also finalized when you kind of shifted into talking
11 about E. So, one thing to note, it is 3:37 you do have
12 a time certain at 4:00 with the Tanana Chiefs Conference
13 Tribal Resource Stewardship Department and the Kuskokwim
14 River Inter Tribal Fish Commission. So, I don't know if
15 you guys want to take a break before that happens or if
16 you want to launch into WP24-01. I'm not gonna [sic] say
17 that that one would be quick. It could be quick, it
18 could not. So, it's up to you guys.
19

20 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I said -- excuse
21 me. That'll put us too close to our next thing to even
22 cover this. I think we can -- I think Liz can go over
23 this. I think we can deal with this one fairly quickly.
24 This has been before us before, and this is the Statewide
25 sale of Brown bear hides deferred by the Federal
26 Subsistence Board and so, Liz has a handout. We're gonna
27 [sic] look that over and then she's gonna [sic] give us
28 a presentation on that. This is just a review of a
29 proposal that the State, or correction, the Federal
30 Subsistence Board wanted us to review again. And so, go
31 ahead, Liz.
32

33 MS. WILLIAMS: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair
34 and members of the Council. You have seen this proposal
35 before and it's in your book. It's WP24-01.
36

37 MS. PILCHER: It's in the manila folder.
38

39 MS. WILLIAMS: Oh, that's right. So,
40 while you get to looking at it, I'm gonna [sic] start
41 telling you it's been to the Board twice now. And the
42 first time it went to the Board, they deferred it because
43 the State could not provide the permit needed for Units
44 with bears that had a one bear limit. So, the -- there
45 is a -- sorry, there is a permit that you need to harvest
46 these bears, and the Fish and Wildlife Service has
47 authorized the state of Alaska to issue these permits.
48 And the state of Alaska can only issue this permit if
49 it's in a Unit that allows a two-bear harvest. Because
50 if there's a one bear harvest, they may or may not have

1 conservation concerns or just lack of knowledge on the
2 bear population. So, this permit is called the
3 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
4 and we in the government call it CITES. So, this is
5 about the sale of brown bear hides and what we did --
6 or actually what the Board asked the staff to do is to
7 go back and see how can they make this work and so, what
8 the analysts did and it's not me, it's Pippa Kenner. But
9 they found out that maybe instead of getting a CITES
10 permit or a permit that allows you to sell it
11 internationally, OSM makes its own permit just to sell
12 it for personal use only within the United States. And
13 because it's not going to an international sale, you
14 could sell a brown bear hide harvested under Federal
15 Subsistence regulations only, which means you take the
16 meat. And so, this is a way for especially the proponent
17 who was from McCarthy, who lives in a one bear harvest
18 Unit area, to harvest a brown bear for subsistence and
19 sell the hide and instead of having to get a permit from
20 the State for the Convention on International Trade in
21 Endangered Species, you would just get a permit from OSM
22 saying you're doing customary trade. Now, the other
23 aspect of it is, you still have to get the bear sealed
24 by the State, because that's how the State keeps track
25 of bear harvests and bears aren't tracked the way other
26 species are but with fish, moose, caribou declining,
27 many more people are relying on bears and so, the Board
28 said, this sounds like a good idea, but because the
29 Councils haven't heard it before, we want to take this
30 back to the Councils to make it clear that under Federal
31 Subsistence regulations, rural Alaskans, federally
32 qualified subsistence users, can harvest the brown bear
33 and sell the hide. And the reason the proponents
34 suggested this is just to offset some of the cost of
35 subsistence harvesting, cause it's expensive to buy gas
36 and ammo and go out and harvest a bear. Now in Alaska,
37 brown bears are not endangered, but the populations are
38 very small and low in a lot of the lower 48 States. So,
39 I saw some hands go up in confusion. I've seen some
40 nodding heads. So, we may just want to switch to
41 questions, but this is what the OSM staff has come up
42 with, showed it to the Board, they said okay, but we
43 have to make sure the Councils are okay with it. So,
44 like the Chair said, you have looked at this before and
45 you may not remember. But anyway, I'll stop there and
46 see if there's any questions.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, Council
49 members this clean this proposal up. I think this was
50 the best direction that the OSM. Most people are not

1 gonna [sic] -- you know, most of the people that are
2 gonna harvest bears under Federal Subsistence
3 regulations are gonna [sic] get the meat, they could
4 sell the skin. They'd have to get the State to seal the
5 skin, the State likes to seal bears. They got to get
6 certain data, you know, count them and all that. I think
7 that it would address the State's concern about the
8 harvest levels and so forth. They would be able to track
9 the bear harvest. They're not opposed to harvest at all
10 about bears. They would be able to track the harvest.
11 So, I think this is a win-win proposal. So, I'm
12 supportive of this WP24-01 with the OSM language to use
13 the permitting system of Federal Subsistence permitting
14 system and the sealing by the State. I think that
15 addresses all of the issues. Any comments? Am I
16 misunderstanding anything here, Brian? Go ahead.

17
18 MS. WILLIAMS: Oh, thank you, Mr. Chair.
19 The permit has not been created yet, and so, you wouldn't
20 be able to do this until it's actually codified in
21 regulation. So, the OSM staff with the regulation
22 specialist within OSM will come up with a permit. So,
23 that hasn't been decided yet of what the customary permit
24 -- customary trade permit would say or look like.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, that clarifies
27 that. Go ahead, Robert.

28
29 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Liz,
30 you know, I think it was 20 some years ago that we put
31 a proposal into the State about customary use of brown
32 bears hide that where the tribes could take them and I
33 think it was -- we asked for two, but I think the State
34 shot us down on that, if I remember right. They said
35 that we cannot because it's considered not a fur bearing
36 animal or something like that, not to be to be sold. And
37 now they come back 20 years later and say, we can do
38 this. And my other question it was, when I -- we did
39 talk to them, there was four of us, myself, James Walker,
40 Carter Morgan and Ron Sam, were the ones that put that
41 in. But the biologist for the State says, well, you're
42 gonna [sic] have to be careful now, because north of the
43 Yukon, it's grizzly bears and south of the Yukon is
44 brown bears. Okay, grizzly bears swim across the river.
45 Okay, now he's a brown bear. That's true, yes, or no?

46
47 MS. WILLIAMS: Now they consider them all
48 the same species.

49
50

1 MR. Walker: Well, that's what we were
2 told.

3
4 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, well.....

5
6 MR. WALKER: I think sometimes, you know,
7 having two species - you know, I always tell that as a
8 joke because it's the Fish and Game State. And I always
9 (indiscernible) and these guys could never could quite
10 understand that. That's just like me being an Indian
11 going down the Anchorage, now I'm a white guy and that
12 don't work, you know, because I am still who I am. But
13 to have something like this, I mean, maybe you could
14 clarify it or try to. Thank you, Liz.

15
16
17 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. Thank you, Council
18 member Walker, through the Chair. Both I believe I could
19 be wrong, but the State and the Federal Government now
20 consider black and brown bears as fur bearers. No? Okay,
21 we'll fix it then. But the other thing is, some of these
22 regulations have changed since you spoke to those people
23 20 years ago.

24
25 MR. WALKER: Well, yes. I mean, I
26 understand, but you have to be specific when we do say
27 this, because a brown bear is a different character from
28 a grizzly bear. So, I mean, I would put both species in
29 there if I was gonna [sic] be making this proposal
30 because we could look at both, because they're both very
31 carnivorous. They're just an eating machine, that's all
32 they are. And one of these years, you know, we have our
33 own feelings with our tribe. Just to be specific with
34 what I'm going to say is that, now we have them roaming
35 through our villages at night. And if somebody is gonna
36 [sic] go visit somebody, somebody is gonna [sic] get
37 eaten one of these days and whose responsibility is gonna
38 [sic] be? It's not gonna [sic] be the tribal, it's not
39 gonna [sic] be the city because the State wildlife
40 trooper came to us and told us they belong to us. Okay,
41 who bears the responsibility? That would be my other
42 question for you. I mean, I'm not running this hard on
43 you, but I wanna [sic] have answers to when I go home
44 and talk to the tribes that I'm going to emphasize the
45 point what is brought here. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Under the Federal
48 Subsistence Regulations, they don't have brown and
49 grizzly bears. They just have brown bear; they're now
50 recognized as brown bears. You know, they're -- they

1 used to call grizzly bears. A lot of people still say
2 grizzly bears, but they're brown bears. Ursus arctos,
3 they're the same animal. And so, the -- I'm looking for
4 the State regulations here. They say brown grizzly
5 bears, so maybe the Federal Subsistence Board or OSM
6 should put brown/grizzly bears so that the public knows
7 what they're actually talking about. So, that's a
8 suggestion in the reg book part. That's what Robert's
9 talking about. It's just the same animal. So, it's just
10 -- it's a -- it's just the description.

11
12 MR. Walker: It's not the same animal,
13 Jack. Have you ever seen a characteristic of them side
14 by side. You can tell a difference there between a brown
15 bear and a grizzly bear, we could.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, there, you
18 know, there are certain morphological differences. But
19 as far as they can breed together, you could have them
20 breeding together. They would produce fertile offspring.
21 They're pretty much the same thing. Their, you know,
22 habitat has a lot of bearing on how much fish they eat
23 and stuff like that. But I feel that this proposal WP24-
24 01 is worth supporting by the Council because it
25 addressed the issues. We were supportive of this
26 proposal, and this is what the Federal Subsistence Board
27 does because it's a one bear area the State doesn't go
28 along with. The State only has sale on two bear -- brown
29 bear areas. So, we -- I'm supportive of what OSMs
30 solution to this problem is and I feel that, you know,
31 if somebody takes a bear and you gonna [sic] skin this
32 bear out, you're gonna [sic] take it home and eat it.
33 You should at least be able to sell the skin because the
34 State is -- has very liberal bear harvests for brown
35 grizzly bears. So, there's -- it's not like that we have
36 a huge problem with bears and brown bear grizzly bears
37 in Alaska. So, my feeling about this proposal that it's
38 a worthwhile proposals [sic] and I would like to vote
39 in favor of the proposal with the amended language for
40 this -- for the permitting system. So, any.....

41
42 MR. Walker: I mean. Mr. Chair, I am not
43 going against this, but I just -- you know, I want to
44 have -- or I'd like to see that these are two different
45 species. Because I think if you're gonna [sic] sell a
46 grizzly bear and sell a brown bear, they're -- the brown
47 bear is a lot bigger than grizzly bear when you stretch
48 it out. It's something like maybe six foot five for a
49 grizzly, and you can get like an 8.5 for a brown bear,
50 nine footers.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, I mean but they're gonna [sic] reg it [sic] -- they're gonna [sic] manage them. The State is managing under brown/grizzly bear. They have the same brown/grizzly bear in Unit 24, that they have in Kodiak Island. So, they're -- it's -- there's -- they're not differentiating. And so, for this.....

MR. WALKER: Tim, are you still online? Could you tell us the difference between a Kodiak bear and brown bear?

MR. GERVAIS: Brown bear from what area?

MR. WALKER: From the Yukon.

MR. GERVAIS: My take on it, it's all the same species. It's a naming convention based on the geographic location of where the bear lives.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, Boone and Crockett Trophy Club delineates brown bears as within 75 miles of the coast and interior of that are referred to as grizzly bears. It's just for discussion. But as far as the Board of Game or the Federal Subsistence Board, they're gonna [sic] manage in the Unit, they're gonna [sic] manage that general kind of an animal all the same way. They're not gonna [sic] differentiate between grizzlies and brown bears inside of the Unit. So, this proposal is for the sale of brown bears hides or grizzly bear hides under Federal Subsistence regulations in bears where there's -- in Units where there's only one brown bear. So, you had a comment there, Nissa?

MS. PILCHER: I did, I just wanted to read something real quick from the analysis. And in the analysis, it does say we and I'm assuming by we, we mean OSM, classifies all Alaskan brown/grizzly bears as the same species, *Ursus arctos*, but refer to them differently depending on where they are found and their diet. So, in general.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Page eight.

MS. PILCHER: The common name brown bear refers to those *Ursus arctos* found in the coastal regions, and the common name grizzly bear refers to those brown bears found in the interior. So, commonly they are

1 referred to differently. It's just OSM and I believe
2 Fish and Game, even though I hate to speak for them, do
3 classify them as just one species, even though it is
4 recognized that there's -- they have different
5 characteristics.

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MR. UBELAKER: Mr. Chair.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Brian.

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MR. UBELAKER: Just hopefully a
12 clarifying point, definitions of the State Regulations
13 Guide. Grizzly bear is defined as, the terms brown bear
14 and grizzly bear are synonymous. Fur bearers, under
15 State regulations, are black bears, they're not grizzly
16 bears or brown bears. Federal regulations - fur --
17 definition of fur bearers under Federal regulations,
18 does not cover any species of bear and then the only
19 definition of bear in the Federal regulations is black,
20 brown or grizzly.

21
22

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, the -- Glen
23 Stout might be able to answer the question for this
24 discussion. How is the State categorizing brown bear,
25 grizzly bears when they're sold? They're not furbearers
26 or they're like just there -- that's part of the
27 management of the brown grizzly bear. Since black bears
28 are fur animals and grizzlies aren't, that seems to be
29 a sticking point here. So, that Glenn's the guy. All
30 right. Go ahead, Glenn.

31
32

MR. STOUT: Well, I don't know if I'm the
33 guy. But no, I think you pretty much have it. The grizzly
34 bear, brown bear in regulations, they're more or less
35 synonymous. They're locally referred to brown bears,
36 typically along the coast. Boone and Crockett, I think
37 the 62nd parallel north, everything north of that is
38 actually considered a grizzly. Those are common names,
39 but it's the same species, and the regulations don't
40 differentiate the two.

41
42

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: This whole thing
43 about black bears under State regulations are
44 furbearers, grizzly bears are not, but they're still
45 sold. So, they're just -- it's the sale of brown grizzly
46 bear parts, is part of the management of grizzlies under
47 State regulation. It's not that they're fur bearers,
48 it's just part of the hunting regulations.

49
50

1 MR. STOUT: That's exactly right, they're
2 not a fur bearer. They're a big game animal.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right. So, that
5 clarifies the record. That's what the point of
6 discussion is about. Thanks, Glenn, appreciate that. So,
7 Don.

8
9 MR. HONEA: Oh, yeah. Mr. Chair, I'm
10 really kinda confused about this. Can we actually pass
11 this with modifications, or is that an option? I mean,
12 I think the confusing part to me is the brown bear hides,
13 as opposed to grizzly or black or whatever. I -- you
14 know, and I mean -- actually, you know, I do support
15 this because what are you gonna [sic] do with it? I
16 mean, if you could eat it, I mean -- if you take it, I
17 mean, what's the sense of taking it? I mean, if there
18 was value to doing that, then so be it. It'd be better
19 for -- to take her.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Don, go ahead.

22
23 MR. HONEA: You guys talking about brown
24 bears and grizzly bears. And from what I'm hearing is
25 in these Units. So, why don't you just voted for any
26 bear, any brown bear or grizzly bear or whatever they
27 may be, inside the Units that they're talking about. And
28 whatever is in that unit, just leave it as is, as that
29 at that end. Problem solved.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right.

32
33 MR. HONEA: Brown bear or grizzly.
34 They're both, they're there and that's what you're
35 looking at. That's what's going to be sold anyway. So,
36 thank you.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And those Units
39 would be either two brown bears or subunits would be two
40 brown bears or one brown bear limit. This would allow
41 it in the one brown bear Unit. So, we can adopt the
42 amended proposal. This is the amended proposal by OSM.
43 We're gonna [sic] adopt this amended proposal. If you're
44 really stuck on this brown grizzly bear, we could go
45 brown -- grizzly/brown bear in the title there and we
46 could discuss, put that in there. That would be the
47 modification is to change brown grizzly bear and then
48 adopt the amended language and then we're good. And it
49 would be strictly for Units that are one brown bear
50 units. That's what the sticking point is two versus one.

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1 And Robert.

2

3 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
4 support it too. But you know, if a buyer comes, say,
5 hey, this is grizzly bear. I'm not gonna [sic] give you
6 much for this as I would for a brown bear. That was my
7 question. So, but if we're gonna [sic] declare it like
8 we say we're gonna [sic] do, that's fine with me. But I
9 still know the difference, you know? And I'll tell them,
10 you know, this is the same price. Whatever it is we're
11 gonna [sic] sell it'll cost you \$10,000, even though
12 it's a grizzly bear, so.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right.

15

16 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, the Chair will
19 enter -- oh, Tommy.

20

21 MR. KRISKA: Oh, yeah. I have a lot of
22 pictures of the bears that we shot, and I could tell
23 some of them are brown bears and way in the interior and
24 some are grizzlies that are in the interior. Maybe 50%
25 of them are brown bears, there's some big bears. And so,
26 it's like I said, it's -- go ahead with the Unit,
27 whatever is that in the unit is go with that. Because
28 you're never gonna [sic] tell -- they're never gonna
29 [sic] give you a chance to figure if they're grizzly or
30 brown bear. They're gone in a minute.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, the proposal is
33 about Units. It's about bear -- Game management units
34 that only have one brown bear limit. That's what the
35 proposal revolves around. And so -- and just a general
36 sale on Federal Subsistence regulations.

37

38 MR. KRISKA: I guess it was just two
39 bears in whatever those Units were, right? It's only
40 allowed in where there's two bears?

41

42 MS. WILLIAMS: So, every Unit -- this is
43 Liz Williams, OSM. Every Unit has a limit in the Federal
44 Subsistence regulations and the State regulations. And
45 the State could not issue the proper permits for a one-
46 bear Unit. But under Federal Subsistence regulations,
47 you can harvest it in a one-bear Unit. And so, different
48 Units have different amounts as their limit depending
49 on the population maybe. And so, there are -- I think
50 there's a few Units with even more than two, maybe not.

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1 But anyway, you can't get the Federal -- the
2 International Sale Permit for a one-bear Unit through
3 the State. So, OSM wanted to make it accessible to one
4 bear Units as well as the two bear Units, and both brown
5 and grizzly are included.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tommy.

8

9 MR. KRISKA: Yeah, that's kind of a touchy
10 deal, that when you allow bear hides and bear all this
11 stuff to be sold, and you're gonna [sic] have to watch
12 it, because they may be a lot of bears out there, but
13 there's a lot of ambitious people that want money. And
14 it's going to end quick. So, we've got to be prepared
15 to put a stop to it in some way. I'm not sure, but I'm
16 [sic] kinda.....

17

18 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: They were -- I want
19 to clarify that they're gonna [sic] have to get them
20 sealed before they can sell them. So, they would -- the
21 State would be tracking the number of harvests. And Glenn
22 has a specific number of bears that can be harvested by
23 Game. Right, Glenn? You got a -- pretty much each Game
24 management Unit has a specific amount of bears that's
25 harvestable surplus for that Unit. If that starts to get
26 out of control, then their proposals could eliminate
27 that. But right now, nobody's shooting bears. There's
28 hardly -- the bear population keeps getting bigger,
29 which shows the harvest is not restraining the bear
30 population. And Subsistence -- this is a Subsistence
31 proposal. The number of Subsistence eligibility is
32 actually way smaller than the general population. So, I
33 don't see where that's gonna [sic] be a big problem. I
34 -- but if it does, it can -- they do have to be sealed
35 to be able to sell them. You have to bring it to Glenn
36 to get it sealed. He goes like, well, gee whiz, you guys
37 are getting 25 bears out of your subunit here. We're
38 gonna [sic] shut -- we're gonna [sic] have to throttle
39 this down. So, that's - but I would be surprised.

40

41 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair.

42

43 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don.

44

45 MR. HONEA: Is there a motion on the
46 floor?

47

48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Not yet. I'm trying
49 to get one.

50

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1 MR. HONEA: Okay. I make that motion to
2 support.

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4 (Simultaneous speech)

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6 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: With the amended
7 language?

8
9 MR. HONEA: With the amended language.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And so, with
12 the.....

13
14 MR. HONEA: Thank you.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: With the caveat
17 that these are brown grizzly bear. So, we got a second
18 for that?

19
20 MS. PILCHER: Can I offer
21 clarification.....

22
23 (Simultaneous speech)

24
25 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Sorry, correction.
26 Go ahead, Nissa.

27
28 MS. PILCHER: I just wanted to -- in the
29 - so, you moved to support the revised OSM conclusion
30 in the addendum, which would be that new -- that
31 information that you guys were just talking about. So,
32 I just want to make sure that that is clear and on the
33 record.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right.

36
37 MS. PILCHER: Don, is that what you
38 wanted? So, that's what we were just talking about, the
39 new permit.

40
41 MR. HONEA: Exactly.

42
43 MS. PILCHER: Okay, there we go. So, we
44 just need a second. Thanks, Don.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, the motion
47 should read for WP24-01 February 25, OSM addendum with
48 all of the supporting language, support with
49 modification language. That's what we're talking about.
50 Do we have a second, Tommy, was that you?

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MR. KRISKA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded. Further discussion on WP24-01 with addendum Modification Language. Questions called. Those in favor of the proposal as modified, signified by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

Opposed, same sign. Motion is adopted. So, now we're gonna [sic] go to break. Oh, go -- you got to find.....

MR. WALKER: Mr. Chair, thank you. Could we have the people -- could they get this permit online rather than have to go to find an office out in rural Alaska?

MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you, member Walker. Through the Chair, this is Liz at OSM. I don't know. We hope so, but that hasn't been determined yet. The Board is waiting to find out the Council's wishes related to this, and I -- as I understand it, the permit will be created after.

MR. VICKERS: I'll just add Liz is very correct in everything she says. I'll just add that -- this is Brent Vickers, OSM, for the record. That we are working on an online database. That is something that OSM is working on. I'm hoping it goes live at some point soon but still working through a lot of the kinks and it's quite possible that if this particular proposal is adopted, it might take a little while for that permit goes into effect. Because, of just government stuff and trying to get a new permit started and everything. So, we'll have to -- once this gets adopted, we'll have to get back to you on how soon we can start the permit and how - what the status of the online database is at that time.

MR. WALKER: Yes, that sounds like a perfect plan. You know, that's another thing with our government-to-government consultation with the tribe. So, if you can keep this up with the tribes and out in rural Alaska. Just send them flyers or whatever. This would be so grateful. That way we wouldn't have to ask questions or call people up, which a lot of times people don't get to happen because it's the same question over and over and over. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're gonna [sic] have to go to a timeout for ten minutes, and then we have time certain Tanana Chiefs Conference Tribal Resource Stewardship Department and Kuskokwim Inter-Tribal Fish Commission joint presentation on the chum bycatch. And so, I'm sorry we got bottled up here with -- we're running a hair behind schedule, but we need a ten-minute break. Ten. We're gonna [sic] be back at quarter after four.

12

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MS. PILCHER: We say five, but we know it'll be ten anyway

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Let's say five.

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(Off record)

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(On record)

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we're gonna [sic] be coming back to order. We're past our ten minutes, always -- five minutes or so over. So, Tommy, let's see who else we need here. Where's Robert? Robert and Don. Where'd they go?

28

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MS. PILCHER: They might be outside. I can go look for them. I just want to.....

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So.....

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MS. PILCHER: I can go look for him out in the hallway. But just so everybody knows, Krystal just helped me by passing out a green folder. The green folder is intended for this presentation and then also information regarding the session this evening. I didn't want to get them mixed up together. So, her PowerPoint is in there. I will be putting it on the screen, but I'm gonna [sic] go pop out in the hallway.

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(Pause)

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: You can introduce yourself if you'd like. Turn the mic on.

MS. LAPP: Good afternoon. I didn't know if we were still waiting for people to get seated. But I'm happy to introduce myself. I'm Krystal Lapp, I'm with Tanana Chiefs Conference in their Tribal Resource

1 Stewardship Department. I am the natural resource policy
2 analyst. So, I'll be providing a quick presentation
3 today that kind of preludes into the special engagement
4 session with the North Pacific tonight. And through the
5 Chair, just let me know when you would like me to get
6 started on the presentation.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Council members in
9 the room. So, Robert, Don, we're getting the
10 presentation here. So, go ahead and proceed.

11
12 MS. LAPP: Thank you, Chair and members
13 of the RAC. Let me just make sure it's up. We're still
14 working on getting the presentation put on the
15 projector. However, you guys did receive a handout of
16 the hard copy presentation, so. And there are print outs
17 available for members of the public over there on the
18 resource table. All right, so since I already introduced
19 myself and I'm going to go through my little spiel here.
20 So, good afternoon, everyone. Today I'll be discussing
21 the ongoing environmental impact statement process for
22 the chum salmon bycatch management in the Bering Sea.
23 My presentation will be highlighting the role of tribal
24 cooperating agencies through this process. The tribal
25 cooperating agencies include Tanana Chiefs Conference,
26 and the Kuskokwim River Inter Tribal Fish Commission.
27 I'm the only one up here today. My co-author with the
28 Kusko Fish Commission is on vacation, which I fully
29 endorse.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Who is your co-
32 author?

33
34 MS. LAPP: Her name is Teresa Vicenti

35
36 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

37
38 MS. LAPP: And on the very last slide,
39 it does include both of our contact information. Which
40 is why I'm going off of the script here, cause they're
41 not here to answer questions. But again, this
42 presentation is intended as an overview of the
43 contributions made by the cooperating agencies and a
44 high-level overview of the revised five alternatives,
45 TCC and KRITFC to the chum salmon bycatch process. It
46 is not meant to provide detailed technical explanations
47 or advocate for specific policies on alternatives.
48 However, the opportunity to ask those types of questions
49 will be available this evening during the special RAC
50 North Pacific Council engagement at 6:30. And so, as we

1 go on to slide two, page two, this is a brief overview
2 on what a cooperating role means. I do want to highlight
3 that the cooperating agency agreements that we've
4 entered into with NOAA NMFS is pretty unprecedented, and
5 we've both been navigating this environmental impact
6 statement process going forth. So basically, what
7 cooperating agency means is that we were identified as
8 having specific expertise and our specific expertise as
9 cooperating agencies, our role is basically to ensure
10 that traditional knowledge and scientific data and lived
11 experiences of our communities are accurately
12 represented within the Chum Bycatch Environmental Impact
13 Statement process. While we will highlight the impacts
14 of salmon declines in key areas of concern, the final
15 policy decisions will be made through the formal
16 regulatory process, with input from multiple
17 stakeholders.

18
19 As cooperating agencies within the EIS,
20 TCC and KRITFC have provided again traditional
21 knowledge, scientific data and lived experiences to
22 ensure the voices of our communities are heard in Federal
23 decision making. We've contributed to key sections of
24 the draft EIS focusing on the environmental, cultural,
25 economic impacts of the salmon declines specific to chum
26 salmon. I want to highlight that this EIS process
27 formally began in July 2023 and is currently ongoing.
28 The average time of this process is anywhere from one
29 to three years, and potentially more, depending on the
30 complexity [sic]. As far as, when we became
31 cooperating agencies, KRITFC became a cooperating agency
32 in October 2023 and in April of 2024 Tanana Chiefs
33 Conference became a cooperating agency. The other
34 cooperating agency is the Alaska Department of Fish and
35 Game, and currently the National Marine Fisheries
36 Service, or NOAA fisheries, is lead agency in the EIS
37 process. And just to expand a little bit on the specific
38 special expertise that we were identified as in our MOU.
39 It's regarding the lifecycles, including freshwater and
40 marine stages of chum salmon management and Subsistence
41 use in the Kuskokwim Yukon River, environmental,
42 economic and social importance to the Kuskokwim and
43 Yukon River regions. Our expertise also includes
44 traditional knowledge, local knowledge, Western
45 scientific data and experience as salmon management
46 agencies within the Kuskokwim and Yukon areas. KRITFC
47 was also identified as a special expertise to include
48 traditional knowledge, local knowledge and Western
49 science expertise in the Bering Sea ecosystem, including
50 impacts of salmon bycatch on the Kuskokwim River

1 ecosystem, community and economies. So, if you go to
2 page three. This is just a general highlight of direct
3 contributions that TCC and KRITFC provided to the body
4 of the EIS. We also have some appendices, which is on
5 page four. But I want to highlight that our focus has
6 been on incorporating traditional knowledge historical
7 data and scientific analysis to ensure that the lived
8 experiences of our people along the Kuskokwim and the
9 Yukon rivers and its tributaries are reflected in the
10 decision-making process. Our contributions cover
11 critical areas such as the cultural, economic and health
12 implications of chum salmon declines. The role of chum
13 salmon and subsistence economies, and the cumulative
14 effects of environmental changes as well as bycatch
15 policies. If you go to page four, you'll see that within
16 the body of the EIS as cooperating agencies, we've
17 contributed to over 18 sections in the main document,
18 as well as provided seven appendices. Those appendices
19 serve as additional and supplemental information to the
20 co-authored sections within the chum bycatch, EIS, and
21 or points that we wanted to make sure were put forth for
22 decision making that were not in the main document. And
23 I just want to put a note out there, if you would like
24 me to send any of our appendices or the specific sections
25 within the EIS that we've co-authored, I can get that
26 to your coordinator, and she can distribute those and
27 then also at Tanana Chiefs, we are happy to provide
28 printed materials as well, if that would work better.
29 And so, we go on to page five. And this is just a basic
30 overview of the February 2025 North Pacific Fishery
31 Management Council. They held a special meeting on this
32 is EIS in February. So, just a few weeks ago. That was
33 because the second preliminary draft was published
34 December 20th of 2024. And so, what happened there is
35 we had tribal members, we had tribes, we had tribal non-
36 profits, tribal consortiums, as well as allied
37 organizations attend this meeting to help guide the
38 regulatory process as we move forward in finalizing this
39 draft and getting it ready for publication. I do want
40 to highlight that TCC and KRITFC provided presentations
41 to the Advisory Panel as well as the Council, and then
42 we were available for questions with the Scientific and
43 Statistical Committee. Overall, our presentations were
44 well received. We received a lot of great questions from
45 all of the committees and Council members. And then
46 ultimately some decisions were made based off of
47 testimonies. And just for reference, we had over 80
48 people testify to the Advisory Panel and over 180 people
49 testify. And this is in person to the Council. I do want
50 to highlight again that we had testimony from tribal

1 members along the Yukon-Kuskokwim, Bristol Bay, Norton
2 Sound, and Southeast Alaska. They all sent tribal
3 representatives and there was a big amount of unity
4 amongst all of the tribes that were there, even those
5 who were not experiencing the chum salmon declines that
6 we are on the Yukon. (Pause) Oh sorry, and I just want
7 to note that again, based on the feedback, the Council
8 has now revised some of the alternatives for the chum
9 salmon bycatch management. And I'll go into that a little
10 bit further as we go into a few other -- well, the last
11 page, trying to make it short and sweet for everybody
12 here. So, the next page contains and it's the last page,
13 it contains a lot of information. And again, we know
14 that you guys got a lot of paperwork, so we wanted to
15 keep it pretty short and sweet and to the point. The
16 first section goes over the summary of alternatives to
17 be analyzed. As we move forward, there are still five
18 alternatives. There have been slight revisions to a
19 couple of those. We did our best to summarize those but
20 again, this evening in the special engagement, more of
21 those technical kinda [sic] nitty gritty information
22 will be provided. As the process continues, there's
23 still several critical steps that lie ahead. The North
24 Pacific Fishery Management Council, National Marine
25 Fisheries Service and the cooperating agencies will
26 continue refining the analysis of the draft
27 Environmental Impact Statement, which is set to be
28 published with the Federal Register sometime in August,
29 is the anticipated date. Once released, there's gonna
30 [sic] be opportunities for public comment and we
31 strongly encourage tribal representatives, tribal
32 members, community members and members of Boards and
33 commissions such as this RAC to remain actively engaged
34 and participate. Additionally, NMFS remains open to
35 requests for tribal consultation. This is to ensure that
36 Indigenous perspectives are fully covered or considered
37 in the final decision-making process. On the bottom
38 portion of this presentation, it does not provide dates.
39 I did not have that at the time that we drafted this
40 presentation. However, I do have that now. So, the next
41 phase or phases involves finalizing the draft EIS, which
42 again, once published, a public comment period will open
43 for that. This process helps refine the proposed
44 alternatives as we go through the finalization process
45 and ensuring that the final policies align with
46 community priorities while promoting sustainable
47 fisheries management. That is the goal of the
48 cooperating agencies. We also urge everyone to continue
49 to stay informed, participate in discussions and
50 contribute to shaping the final EIS through public

1 comment. Or you can always reach out to myself or Teresa
2 Vicenti if you have specific questions or you would like
3 additional tribal input put into this final draft. So,
4 going forward, August 2025 is when we anticipate NMFS
5 will be publishing the final draft to the Federal
6 Register. There will be a 60-day public comment period
7 on that. December 2025 is the anticipated final action
8 of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Which
9 basically just means that they're going to hopefully
10 choose a preferred alternative or a combination of
11 alternatives and approve the draft EIS as final. As we
12 go into the next year, we're gonna [sic] be looking at
13 November 2026 of the issuance of the final EIS. The next
14 month, in December, the issuance of record of decision
15 in roughly six months, depending on the complexity of
16 what's chosen, regulations would be implemented on that
17 record of decision. Please keep in mind that this
18 timeline is per the NEPA process and doesn't necessarily
19 reflect the urgency or the motivation of the North
20 Pacific Council to actually get this record of decision
21 going. So, we are hoping that we can fast track this a
22 little bit because we do want to ensure that our salmon
23 populations are being protected in some way in the Bering
24 Sea. But again, I want to just thank you guys for your
25 time and allowing me to come up here. I have a lot of
26 information that I could be up here for a whole day. So,
27 I apologize if there's holes in this presentation. But
28 I do, again, encourage questions and I encourage you
29 guys to reach out one on one.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, does any
32 Council members have questions on Krystal's
33 presentation? Okay. I have Don. Go right ahead.

34
35 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Krystal
36 I -- oh there's a lot of questions, actually, but so,
37 the alternatives like alternatives one through five. Is
38 that the timeline on there or this will be done or
39 something like that. I mean I see you got bycatch, I see
40 you got numbers in there. So, how does that work with -
41 - where are you on the alternatives? Is that a
42 appropriate question? I mean, I'm just wondering, you
43 know, how does that work? How does your alternatives
44 work? If you could explain that. Thank you.

45
46 MS. LAPP: Through the Chair. Thank you,
47 Don, for that question. It is quite a confusing process.
48 And as someone who came into this process a few years
49 ago as an advocate and delegate and now the policy
50 analyst, I will let you know that I'm still always

1 continuing learning this process. So, with that said,
2 the alternatives were not picked by the cooperating
3 agencies they were formed by this Environmental Impact
4 Statement. And so, these five alternatives came about
5 from public comment, from analysis and from the data.
6 So, the reason why we listed those out is because we
7 wanted you to be aware of a very vague or a very short
8 summary of those alternatives. As far as where we're at
9 in the timeline of those that's not something as a
10 cooperating agency, we would be able to pick a preferred
11 alternative and be able to have the North Pacific
12 implement that in. That's where that public comment
13 comes in. In your guy's packet over here, we do have
14 Chief (indiscernible) position statement on the
15 preferred alternatives that TCC has put in. What we're
16 looking at as far as when an alternative or combination
17 of alternatives would be chosen that would be
18 anticipated in that December 2025 meeting. And so,
19 that's where that would be chosen, Don. I hope that
20 answered your question. Sorry, it's a pretty loaded
21 question. I'm trying to keep it real short and sweet.

22
23 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair. Yeah, thank you,
24 Krystal. I realize it's a loaded question. If it wasn't
25 your alternatives then, you know, I don't know how you'd
26 answer that, but this whole thing is -- I've actually
27 haven't been with the what is it, the Inter-Tribal Fish
28 Commission. I've actually missed a few of their meetings
29 this winter. And so, I'm kind of behind on, you know,
30 where we are, the projected chum, kings, whatever. So,
31 I'm just coming in kind of blind here, but I thank you
32 for that.

33
34 MS. LAPP: Oh, sorry. Through the Chair.
35 Just some additional information, as we move forward
36 into the finalization process of this EIS, both the
37 cooperating agencies, as well as other tribal agencies
38 throughout Alaska will be providing webinars, handouts,
39 and we have a list of policy people that you can reach
40 out to, one on one to get clarification on this process
41 and to get caught up. We also have some resources listed
42 on the Kuskokwim Fish Commission website and TCC's
43 website as well.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Any other Council
46 questions for Krystal? You're still there, Tim Gervais.

47
48 MR. GERVAIS: Yes, I am. Thank you, Mr.
49 Chair. Krystal, this is Tim Gervais. Can you explain
50 briefly why there isn't EIS being developed for this

1 management plan, and how often these management plans
2 are developed?

3

4 MS. LAPP: Through the Chair. That is an
5 excellent question. I'm actually going to defer that to
6 the special engagement tonight. Just because we as a
7 cooperating agency, we do have the history on how this
8 came about. But I think some of those questions will be
9 answered as well in their presentation. I do have a
10 timeline slide of kinda [sic] how we got here. And I can
11 definitely pull that up and send that over to Nissa to
12 make sure you guys get it as well. It's highly detailed,
13 there's a lot of information in there. And again, just
14 to be courteous of time, I could probably spend hours
15 talking about that timeline as to how we got here. This
16 has been a few, quite a few years in the making, and we
17 still have quite a few years to go before we get this
18 record of decision. So, if that's agreeable through the
19 Chair and through the members, I will be happy to send
20 that off right now.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, thank you.
23 Did that answer your question, Tim?

24

25 MR. GERVAIS: (Indiscernible) question,
26 Mr. Chair?

27

28 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, go ahead, Tim.

29

30

31 MR. GERVAIS: Krystal, I'm looking on,
32 let me see what page this is, page 18 of 104. I don't
33 think it's your presentation. It's the actual draft EIS
34 and you have a pie chart showing that about three
35 quarters of the bycatch is from either Northeast or
36 Southeast Asia. And I'm wondering, based on your
37 interaction with North Pacific Management Council, what
38 -- how does the Council and how do these Asian countries
39 -- what's their response to that level of bycatch from
40 their homeward fish?

41

42 MS. LAPP: Just clarifying question
43 through the Chair, for Tim. You're asking, you are
44 looking at the EIS, and I do understand that. I believe
45 you're looking at an analysis that was not part of the
46 cooperating agency analysis regarding the percentage
47 amount of chum bycatch that are coming from foreign
48 countries and what the North Pacific feels or thinks
49 about that? I just want to clarify.

50

1 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, I'm wondering if they
2 regard, like obviously they're -- they get feedback from
3 Alaskan groups that are concerned with chum salmon
4 bycatch. But what does -- what are the concerned parties
5 such as North Pacific Management Council and the two
6 cooperating agencies, TCC and Kuskokwim Inter-Tribal
7 Fish Commission, what degree of concern is there
8 regarding these non-Alaskan bycatch components, which
9 are extremely large.

10
11 MS. LAPP: Through the Chair. Yes, thank
12 you for clarifying that. So, I definitely can't speak
13 on behalf of the North Pacific Fishery Management
14 Council. Or NOAA NMFS. I do want to note that on our,
15 let's see, that'd be page three of our little
16 presentation. In one of those bubbles it talks about,
17 like the cumulative effects as well as, like the
18 ecosystem and things like that. Kusko Fish Commission
19 and TCC are highly concerned with the amount of non-
20 Native chum salmon to our area and how much that is
21 making up the bycatch. So, we did address some of that
22 briefly in our appendices as well as in the body of the
23 EIS. It is a concern but I would definitely say, hold
24 that question as well for the North Pacific this evening.
25 I think that they would be better able to state their
26 position on their side. But in a nutshell, yes, it is
27 concerning how many fish are coming from those areas.

28
29 MR. GERVAIS: Okay. Thank you for your
30 presentation and thank you and the Kuskokwim
31 International Travel Fish Commission for getting
32 involved with this important matter. That's all I have,
33 Mr. Chair.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks, Tim.
36 Any other questions?

37
38 (No response)

39
40 I appreciate your presentation,
41 Krystal. It's -- I see your discussions here from TCC
42 about the various options alternatives. And for years
43 I've -- I felt that they -- there should be area closures
44 and time, and the setting bycatch limits in this. When
45 we got these kind of stock returns like, there's not a
46 lot of data about the -- I took genetic samples on the
47 Koyukuk River for chum salmon. We got a big data set,
48 but we're not actually taking it at Area M we're not
49 actually looking at what the genetic makeup is moving
50 into the Bering Sea. And so, they're basically going to

1 track across the Bering Sea, and they need to move the
2 fleet out of that -- out of the direction of that travel.
3 There's certain time frames, the trigger could be when
4 Area M begins to harvest and when they start catching
5 significant bycatch of chum salmon. That's your starting
6 point when you're going to have fish intercepted in the
7 Bering Sea with the trawl fleet. The -- you know, when
8 you take the big pie of all the bycatch throughout the
9 entire year. And so, the fleets fishing on some hatchery
10 fish from over from Asia. And that's mixing apples and
11 oranges. We're trying to get our fish back to the
12 spawning grounds and whether the -- their travel time
13 is in the summer. So, area time of enclosure is a big
14 deal. And I see that you know, that's more supported by
15 TCC.

16
17 But your -- as your State it's -- we're
18 still a long ways out on their development of, you know,
19 they -- they're gonna [sic] want to keep bumping these
20 caps up. And I'm not real excited about seeing really
21 high ceilings on those caps when we have such abysmal
22 returns. I mean, some of these -- there's discrete
23 stocks, you know, you're talking about discrete stocks.
24 There's discrete stocks that can be completely
25 obliterated with -- if harvest occurs at heavy times of
26 the year. So, this is -- these are some of the questions
27 I have. I have questions about the pink and chum salmon
28 release in the North Pacific, and the competition for
29 our stocks in general. There's these other issues that
30 the North Pacific is gonna [sic] have -- Pacific
31 Fisheries Management Council is gonna [sic] have to take
32 a more holistic outlook on what this problem is. It
33 would actually behoove them to actually analyze, they
34 have the staff to analyze. NOAA takes trophic level
35 inventories on the Pacific Ocean. They could correlate
36 that to marine bird die offs and other declines in
37 populations. And they could set, they could have
38 suggestions of hatchery release in the North Pacific,
39 Bering and North Gulf of Alaska there has to be a bigger
40 outlook on this. And so, I feel that you're looking at
41 all of these various issues and the, you know, the in-
42 season warm water effects with the size reduction. There
43 -- this has gotta [sic] -- this puzzle's been busted
44 open, and it's got a lot of little pieces that all fit
45 together. And so, but some of the big glaring pieces
46 that are just sitting there in plain view, you can see
47 the picture is too many stock fish, hatchery fish moving
48 on to the -- out into the marine system, when we have
49 marine declines like this. And so, North Pacific, it
50 behooves them to actually -- they have a lot of political

1 power to leverage for reductions in hatchery to get more
2 fish back. So, they don't come under spotlight, killing
3 the last returning fish. That's what I'm gonna [sic] be
4 talking to the North Pacific about myself personally.
5 So, I really appreciate all the work. And you have a lot
6 of stuff rolling around in your head, and I can see
7 that, and you would just, would love to just talk to us
8 for hours. But I'm pretty short on time here because
9 we're gonna [sic] have to go to dinner break pretty
10 soon. And because we gotta [sic] be back here at 6:30
11 prompt. We gotta [sic] get this council at this table
12 at 6:30 p.m. cause we got two hours to talk to the North
13 Pacific Fisheries Management Council and make some.....
14

15 UNIDENTIFIED: (Indiscernible)

16
17 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I don't have any
18 money. And the OSMs broke, they took their cards away
19 from yesterday. So, I do appreciate your discussion. You
20 have any final comments?
21

22 MS. LAPP: No, I just want to say, some
23 of the points that you had brought up when it comes to
24 time, area closures and caps. During the last two North
25 Pacific meetings where we had strong testifiers come in
26 there, the revisions made, or new alternatives added was
27 a direct result of that interaction amongst our people
28 and our allies. So, my biggest thing is, you know, keep
29 engaging as RAC. I do appreciate all of the letters that
30 both the Eastern and Western Interior RACs have
31 submitted to the North Pacific. And then individually,
32 make sure that you go home and tell your people that
33 this is an important thing. The things that do happen
34 in -- when our juvenile salmon are out there, you know,
35 living it up in the world. They need to be able to go
36 live it up, but they need to make it sure they get back
37 home. So yeah, we do know that this is a multifaceted
38 issue. I want to just make that loud and clear. We know
39 that it's typically, like most other things that fall,
40 it isn't just one thing that makes it fall. It's a
41 cumulative effect of many different things. But as
42 humans and as people who are stewards of our land, and
43 our fish, and our wildlife and our waters both in the
44 interior and those who make the regulatory decisions out
45 in the ocean. They're stewards too, whether they want
46 to believe it or not, because they make those decisions
47 for the people. So, my biggest thing is, while there's
48 many different things that we can't control as humans,
49 we need to look at the things we can control. And where
50 can we change those? And so, throughout this whole EIS

1 process that I've been through, that's really what we're
2 focusing on. And when we look at our traditional
3 knowledge and we look at our knowledge holders and our
4 elders, that is a big thing that they hone in to me,
5 every single time, is we can't control everything. We
6 can only control what we do. So, I want to definitely
7 say, Chief Green from Galena Loudon over there, when we
8 were down at the North Pacific, he asked the question
9 of when you leave today, did you do everything that you
10 possibly could? Whether that leads to something that you
11 want or not. But did you do everything you possibly
12 could? And if you say yes, then you did. But if you say
13 no, then you didn't. So, I just wanted to leave that
14 there cause [sic] that definitely stuck in my brain, on
15 those days where I feel like I'm not doing enough. And
16 yes, you're right I definitely have tons of stuff
17 bouncing around my head, and I could take a whole week
18 if I would like to go over everything, but unfortunately,
19 I can't. And that's why, again, feel free to reach out
20 and if I don't have the answer, I'll find someone that
21 does have the answer. So, senii.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, thank you.
24 Don.

25
26 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
27 Krystal, I'm a little confused here. So, you -- there's
28 nobody in the audience here that is representing Yukon
29 River Intertribal Fish Commission. Is that Eva Dawn? I
30 mean so, I mean, it's kinda interesting that you know,
31 the -- you guys' position or something I'm trying to
32 figure it out. Is that hunting and fishing and stuff and
33 -- because it you know, it changes so often, the Boards
34 or the seats change so often. So, if we - so, it seems
35 like you guys got a pretty good handle on the chum and
36 stuff like that. But isn't that the job of the Yukon
37 Intertribal Fish Commission? I mean, is that even on am
38 I mixing it up here, because I -- last I know, it was
39 the gal from Eagle. What's her name? Karma. Yeah. And
40 so, I've been out of the loop since then, but I was just
41 --it's kinda confusing, under what umbrella everybody -
42 - and I don't wanna [sic] take too much time on this,
43 but I just thought if I had the fish questions like
44 this. Do I go to Yukon Inter Tribal or you guys? Thank
45 you.

46
47 MS. LAPP: Yeah, I could just give a
48 quick update. So, Karma, chief Karma Ulvi of Eagle was
49 the Chair up until about end of November for the Fish
50 Commission, and she was also the Acting ED. She stepped

1 down from that role and they had an executive Council
2 meeting, and they appointed Charlie Wright as the Chair
3 of the Fish Commission. He's now the Acting ED also. And
4 they're in the process of becoming their own 501C3
5 standalone entity. And they had a meeting early January
6 and I believe they have another meeting date set for end
7 of April. We did have representatives, Eva, and they
8 hired Jazmyn Vent as their outreach coordinator, but I
9 think they stepped away. But we could talk more after,
10 too, about touching base with them more.

11
12 MR. HONEA: Okay, just one quick question
13 here. So yeah. So, even though Charlie and Eva and them,
14 they're still in there, you guys support them,
15 supplement them with help in the fisheries?

16
17 MS. LAPP: Yeah. So, the Fish Commission
18 and TCC will remain like sister orgs, similar to how we
19 work with Denakkanaaga and F&A and Doyon as sister orgs
20 working towards similar goals. Yeah, and so, we will
21 continue to work on fisheries issues at TCC. Our chiefs
22 won't let us not work on fish so, we'll always remain
23 in that arena also.

24
25 UNIDENTIFIED: I just wanted to add that
26 per our MOU that we signed, the Yukon River Intertribal
27 Fish Commission is listed as a sister organization and
28 has contributed to the EIS in the appendices. So, we do
29 work closely with them on this process.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Final
32 comment Tommy?

33
34 MR. KRISKA: Yeah, thank you. Thank you,
35 guys, for all you do. And I've been there for a lot of
36 years with you guys, and I really appreciate everything
37 that you're doing. I'm sorry I missed the last few
38 meetings. I'm like Don a little bit, kind of bouncing
39 around and you get into a lot of other things and then
40 -- but never give up. And just you guys are doing a
41 great job from what I can see and thank you for that.
42 And I know something will happen. Thank you.

43
44 MS. LAPP: Thank you, Tommy.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Tommy.
47 Thank you.

48
49 MS. LAPP: Thank you.

000131

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we're gonna
2 [sic] go to break, dinner break. And we're gonna [sic]
3 be back here at 6:30 p.m. sharp. We can leave these and
4 we're gonna [sic] come back here. We're gonna [sic] have
5 a.....

6
7 (Off record)

8
9 (On record)

10
11 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, what time is
12 it? Oh, we're two minutes late. Are you there, Tim? Tim
13 Gervais?

14
15 MR. GERVAIS: Yes, Jack. I'm here.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. And just
18 maybe get a little close to your mic. So, we're gonna
19 [sic] to bring this meeting to order, cause [sic] I got
20 to by talking about different issues and lose track of
21 time. So, I got 6:34 on my watch here. And so, I would
22 like to go around the room and for the record, and
23 introduce our various North Pacific Fisheries Management
24 Council and, through our Council to introduce ourselves
25 and then down to the your staff, down on the other end.
26 How would that be? So, we'll start over here on the left
27 corner. I can't read your name.

28
29 MS. VANDERHOEVEN: Hi, I'm Anne
30 Vanderhoeven. I'm a North Pacific Council member from
31 Washington State.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, cool.

34
35 MS. BAKER: Hello, I'm Rachel Baker and
36 I work for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. I'm
37 based in Juneau, and I serve as commissioner Doug
38 Vincent-lang, designee on the North Pacific Fishery
39 Management Council

40
41 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you and then
42 yeah, just continue to introduce yourself. Don, where
43 are you from?

44
45 MR. HONEA: Check. Don Honea, Jr. Village
46 of Ruby, Western Interior.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Robert.

49
50

1 MR. WALKER: Good after -- good evening,
2 Robert Walker. I'm also a tribal chief here, and I work
3 with the Western Interior and welcome.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, I'm Jack
6 Reakoff, Chair of the Western Interior Council. I've
7 been on this Council since 1993, when they insemiate,
8 the inception of these Councils. And I live in the
9 Central Brooks Range in Wiseman, Alaska. I've lived in
10 the Brooks Range since I was three years old, I was born
11 in the Territory of Alaska in 1957. Got the seal of the
12 territory on my birth certificate. Like a lot of other
13 people in this room here, and so I have a lot of
14 interests, and I've worked on fish and wildlife issues
15 as Chairman of the Koyukuk River Advisory Committee. I
16 am also on the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource
17 Commission. I can talk Fish and Game with various
18 biologists. So, that's me. And here is.

19
20 MS. PELKOLA: I'm Jenny Pelkola from
21 Galena and I'm on the WIRAC.

22
23 MR. SIMON: Pollock Simon Sr. is my name.
24 I live in Allakaket, Upper Koyukuk River. And I'm a
25 fisherman, hunter, trapper, and dishwasher, subsistence
26 and Allakaket. In the last several years there hasn't
27 been any salmon (indiscernible) but, we were restricted
28 from taking salmon, and chinook salmon chum salmon. But
29 we have whitefish and sheefish that we depend on. But
30 life is kind of different with no salmon, like up and
31 down river to chinook salmon is the main fish diet for
32 our peoples. We have whitefish, which is good too but
33 not quite as good as chinook salmon, so. We've been out
34 trying, working together, the different agencies,
35 peoples up and down river has been listening to Fish and
36 Games and Wildlife, the rules and regulations. We abide
37 by these rules even though we (indiscernible) that
38 chinook salmon swim upriver. But when you're sitting on
39 it cause we want to reach. (indiscernible) built up
40 again. He will get fish from reaching the(indiscernible)
41 they don't have chinook fish. But it's not the same as
42 the ones we pulled from the river.....

43
44 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, Pollock,
45 they're gonna [sic] give us a report on the Bering Sea.

46
47 MR. SIMON: Okay.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And so, they're
50 gonna [sic] be talking about that.

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MR. SIMON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you. So, appreciate those comments, Pollock. Pollock is a long standing. He was also on the Western Interior Council in the inception. And so, Pollock has got a lot of, you know, compassion about -- and we have to hear about the compassion, about this issue. So, thank you very much, Pollock appreciate that. Tommy?

MR. Kriska: Tom Kriska, originally from Koyukuk, live in Nulato. And I'm in Middle Yukon Advisory Committee. The WIRAC, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association and Fish Commission, so.

MR. MOLLER: Yeah, thank you for having me. John Moller, originally from Unalaska. I'm a Council member on North Pacific, Alaska one of the Alaska Council members. I was appointed this last summer and recently completed my third meeting as a Council member so, I'm happy to be here. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Welcome. Steve.

MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, good evening. Thank you for having me. My name is Steve Williams, I'm the Oregon representative to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you.

MS. HAAPALA: Hi, everyone. My name is Kate Haapala, and I work on Council staff as an analyst, and I'm one of the staffers who work on the Bering Sea Chum Salmon Bycatch Actions. So, thanks for having us and glad to be here.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you.

MS. MARRINAN: Hi. My name is Sarah Marrinan. I'm also Council staff and with Kate worked on this EIS, and I'm happy to be here. I'm based out of Anchorage, and I've worked with Council staff for little over ten years now. So, appreciate you having us.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you. I really appreciate the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council and staff attending this meeting. It's a very important issue to us. And so, I'm very appreciative

1 that you've taken the time to come here to speak to our
2 Council about your various options on chum bycatch. I
3 also have Tim Gervais on the phone. You want to introduce
4 yourself, Tim.

5
6 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
7 is Tim Gervais from Ruby. I've been on the WIRAC for, I
8 don't know for sure around 15 years. I hold a commercial
9 user's seat. I have not been able to commercial fish on
10 the Yukon since 1998. I have not subsistence fished on
11 the Yukon since 2017. I would like to get our chum and
12 king salmon runs returned, and our escapement goals met
13 on an annual basis. Thank you for showing up to discuss
14 the chum salmon plan with us.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks, Tim.
17 So, I'll turn this over to your able staff here. That's
18 gonna [sic] give us a presentation and you have
19 PowerPoint that accompanies this?

20
21 MS. MARRINAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes,
22 there's a PowerPoint. I passed out some paper copies to
23 RAC members and North Pacific Fishery Management Council
24 members, and I believe there's a pile of them for people
25 in the public too, if you want a paper copy. I'm gonna
26 [sic] be providing a presentation here and I also wanted
27 to note within the paper copies, there's a lot of extra
28 slides and content as well that I can reference and if
29 you have questions, I can move to some of those slides
30 as well. But thank you again for having us. One thing I
31 wanted to note before I walk through this presentation
32 is that on the outreach trips that we're doing, including
33 this one, we don't have a quorum of our Council members
34 here. So, it's not a formal meeting of the Council that
35 these members represent. I just wanted to make sure to
36 highlight that. In terms of what RAC members and the
37 public can expect, staff and Council members are gonna
38 [sic] keep track of key themes and reoccurring questions
39 and topics that come up during these sessions and we're
40 gonna [sic] provide a written report to the full Council
41 on all of the RAC outreach at a future Council meeting.
42 So, that will be forthcoming. And Nissa, should I just
43 tell you when I -- next slide. Okay. So, next slide. So,
44 to just quickly walk through the plan, the presentation
45 here. I'm gonna [sic] start with an overview of NPFMC
46 and the decision-making process. The main content for
47 this presentation is focused on (distortion) the current
48 chum salmon bycatch action and the proposed alternatives
49 that are being considered at the Council. Should the
50 RACs wish to continue to provide input to the Council

1 on this issue. I'll also cover some of the more
2 substantial changes made to the alternatives in
3 February. Krystal alluded to some of those earlier, and
4 if you have more questions or you want to talk in more
5 depth of those, we can certainly speak to that. And in
6 the final part, we'll walk through the next phases of
7 the action timeline, what you can expect and how to be
8 involved. So, next slide. The North Pacific Fishery
9 Management Council and National Marine Fisheries
10 Service, or NMFS, jointly manage U.S. fisheries in
11 Federal waters off of Alaska. Those waters are 3 to 200
12 nautical miles from shore. In terms of process and
13 relationship, the Council is not a Federal agency. The
14 Council makes management recommendations to NMFS and the
15 U.S. Secretary of Commerce. And its NMFS responsibility
16 to write, approve and, implement and enforce
17 regulations. Lastly, the Council does coordinate and at
18 times jointly manage fisheries with the state of Alaska.
19 Next slide, please. The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery
20 Conservation and Management Act is the primary law
21 governing Federal fisheries management. This established
22 eight regional fishery management Councils, including
23 the North Pacific Council. It established the nation's
24 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone, as well as
25 the national standards.

26
27 The national standards are principles
28 that must be followed in any management -- fishery
29 management plan to ensure sustainable and responsible
30 management. There are ten of them and the Council must
31 consider all of them. Next slide, please. The Council's
32 jurisdiction covers four regions the Arctic, Bering Sea,
33 Aleutian Islands and the Gulf of Alaska. There's no
34 Federal commercial fisheries in U.S. waters in the
35 Arctic. The Council primarily manages groundfish, so
36 that's, pacific cod, pollock, flatfish, sablefish,
37 rockfish, for example. Also, shellfish and halibut,
38 allocations and it includes a management of bycatch in
39 the groundfish fisheries. Next slide. In terms of
40 composition, the Council has 15 members, 11 of them have
41 voting rights. Of those 11 seats, seven are appointed
42 by the governors of either Alaska or Washington. The
43 other four voting seats are held by various agency
44 officials, and there are four non-voting seats that are
45 held by different agency representatives, as well as the
46 U.S. Coast Guard. Next slide. The Council has five
47 meetings each year that typically run eight days in
48 length. Three meetings are held in Anchorage and one in
49 an Alaska community. Then there's one meeting that's
50 either held in Portland or Seattle each year. At all the

1 Council meetings, the -- and Council Advisory body
2 meetings, they're all open to the public. Written
3 comments can be provided in advance of each meeting, and
4 the Council meetings are hybrid. Testimony can be
5 provided in person or virtually on agenda items of
6 interest, and staff also stream the meetings over
7 YouTube for a low bandwidth option. Next slide, please.
8 So, the Council is currently considering management
9 (distortion). Our actions are focused on the Pollock
10 fishery because this fishery encounters the majority of
11 salmon caught as bycatch in Federal groundfish
12 fisheries. In one of those slides in the background
13 speaks to that point. So, the purpose of this action is
14 to reduce chum salmon bycatch to the extent practicable,
15 particularly Western Alaska chum salmon bycatch. And
16 this action is being considered in light of recent and
17 ongoing declines in Western Alaska chum salmon
18 abundance. Next slide. So, this is a little hard to read
19 on the screen. You may be able to see it in the printed-
20 out version, but the timeline provides milestones of
21 current action -- the current action aiming to minimize
22 chum salmon bycatch, and the impetus for this action
23 really came from tribal representatives and subsistence
24 fishers. In October 2021, the Council received public
25 testimony on chum and chinook run crashes in that year.
26 For which chum salmon coincided with a high bycatch year
27 as well. So, following that meeting in June 2022, the
28 Council received -- requested information and bycatch
29 reports. At that point, the Council requested the
30 industry take immediate action for the upcoming B season
31 to reduce bycatch. And it also initiated the Salmon
32 Bycatch Committee. So, there was a question that spoke
33 to this. I think Tim mentioned this earlier when he was
34 speaking with Krystal, that Salmon Bycatch Committee
35 made recommendations to the Council on the Purpose and
36 Need Statement. That was a consensus recommendation
37 which the Council adopted and made recommendations for
38 a set of alternatives. So, that Salmon Bycatch Committee
39 was composed of tribal representatives and
40 representatives from the pollock fishery, and they
41 brought together concepts that were forwarded on to the
42 Council. The idea of the overall bycatch cap and came
43 from the tribal representatives and the alternatives
44 four concept that I'm gonna [sic] speak more to came
45 from the pollock side of that. Since then, the Councils
46 received three different iterations of the analysis,
47 most recently, earlier this month. Next slide, please.
48 So, as I mentioned before, the Council makes
49 recommendations to the National Marine Fisheries Service
50 and NMFS is the lead agency for this chum salmon bycatch

1 action. There are three cooperating agencies providing
2 special expertise to the analysis, ADF&G, Kuskokwim
3 River Inter Tribal Fish Commission and the Tanana Chiefs
4 Conference. Next slide. This slide depicts the range of
5 alternatives being considered. The Council is required
6 by law to consider a no action alternative, which is
7 alternative one, and it would retain the existing chum
8 salmon bycatch regulations for the Bering Sea pollock
9 fishery. The Council is considering four action
10 alternatives, which are different ways to modify bycatch
11 regulations. So, broadly, these changes include bycatch
12 caps that would close part or all of the Bering Sea
13 pollock fishery if the limit is met. All regulations
14 would only apply to the B season or summer fishery of
15 the pollock fishery, because that is when they encounter
16 the majority over 99% of the chum bycatch, which is
17 during this season.

18
19 Next slide. Alternative one retains the
20 existing bycatch regulations. So, this includes a
21 rolling hotspot program and a chum salmon savings area.
22 The hotspot program identifies areas on the pollock
23 fishing grounds where chum salmon encounters are high.
24 These areas are closed for three to seven days.
25 Typically, the vessels are required to move elsewhere.
26 The program is managed by a third-party entity. So, the
27 figure on the top here shows all the hotspot closures
28 from 2017 to 2023 under that program. The chum salmon
29 savings area is on the bottom, that's shown in pink.
30 This is a time area closure that's triggered by a bycatch
31 cap. This area continues to exist in regulations, but
32 it's really serves as a backstop measures if vessels
33 choose not to participate in the rolling hotspot
34 program, but that's never happened. So, the vessels
35 participate in the top panel and the lower chum salmon
36 savings area then doesn't apply to them. Next slide. As
37 I mentioned, the impetus for considering regulatory
38 action is due to declines in chum salmon abundance that
39 are being seen throughout Western Interior Alaska and
40 the critical significance of this species. I'm not gonna
41 [sic] go into detail here because I know you are all
42 intimately aware of this context, but just to inform
43 you, the analysis captures data and information on stock
44 status from Kotzebue Sound down to Bristol Bay on
45 subsistence and commercial chum salmon harvest trends
46 on the importance of chum salmon across many dimensions
47 of human salmon ecosystem existence. And there -- these
48 are sections that had substantial contributions from the
49 cooperating agencies, Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish
50 Commission, TCC and ADF&G. And also, I'm highlighting

1 here their appendices that Krystal spoke to earlier,
2 appendix seven to the paper from KRITFC in appendix eight
3 from TCC. So, this information provides context for
4 current conditions and a dynamic baseline under which
5 action is being considered. Next slide. So, focusing on
6 the action alternatives here, alternative two would
7 modify existing bycatch regulations by including an
8 overall hard cap during the B season summer fishery. If
9 the cap is met, fishing must immediately stop and all
10 bycatch all bycaught chum salmon count towards the
11 limit. The range of the cap amounts being considered is
12 100,000 to 550,000. There are four options being
13 considered to divide this cap among the four sectors
14 that fish pollock. The approach, the approaches are
15 based on bycatch history or the sector's pollock
16 allocation. Next slide. Alternative three is similar to
17 alternative two in that it includes a hard cap, but the
18 hard cap is associated with abundance indices. The hard
19 cap under alternatives three can turn on and off based
20 on returns in an area. Here, the policy choice for the
21 Council is really whether the cap would be in effect at
22 times of higher abundance or not. There are two options
23 for indices being considered, but only one would
24 ultimately be selected for use. So, the first option is
25 a three-area index, and the second option is Yukon area
26 index. Next slide. Alternative four that's being
27 considered would add six provisions to the existing
28 regulations for salmon bycatch Incentive Plan Agreements
29 or IPAs. The incentive plans are civil legal contracts
30 among certain members of the Pollock industry. Federal
31 regulations hold specific goals for salmon bycatch
32 avoidance that the contracts must design measures to
33 respond to, so to meet those regulations. The incentive
34 plans are approved by NMFS and the Council receives
35 annual reports on performance as accountability
36 measures. The proposed changes would require the
37 incentive plans to use historical genetic data to more
38 rigorously evaluate catch and bycatch data, to inform
39 closures more frequently, and ensure encounters are not
40 increasing without vessels responding by moving and
41 closing larger areas when encounters are high. The
42 incentive plans have been voluntarily amended in recent
43 years to include measures that largely respond to the
44 six provisions that would be added here.

45
46 This slide speaks to alternative five
47 as it was written and analyzed prior to this February
48 Council meeting that happened earlier this month. This
49 alternative includes three different in-season corridor
50 or time area closures. The corridor would close when a

1 bycatch cap was met. The cap ranges are unique to each
2 corridor, and they're shown in the figure here. The
3 location and timing of the closure windows are based off
4 of historical genetic information indicating Western
5 Alaska chum make up a higher percentage of the total
6 bycatch closer to the Alaska Peninsula and from June to
7 mid-August. So, this slide reflects some of the changes
8 that the Council made to alternatives five. This
9 corridor cap option in February. It still includes the
10 concepts of the in-season corridors, the three different
11 options being considered. There are three different
12 options here that are being considered. So, the table
13 on the left shows the closure window, the cap range that
14 triggers a closure, and a description of how that closure
15 could work, and the managing entity for each option. The
16 main thing to call attention to today are that, compared
17 to what was considered previously prior to the February
18 Council meeting. The corridor area is larger, and the
19 cap range is correspondingly increased as well.
20 Depending on the option the actual area that would close
21 varies. So, the option in the -- on the left, in the
22 middle of the slide is shown in orange. If the corridor
23 cap is met, the entire area closes from that day until
24 September 1st. An option one one which is shown on the
25 right in blue and grey. Here, NMFS would be managing the
26 corridor closure still, but rather than closing the
27 entire area, it would close 75% of that corridor. The
28 grey squares would represent areas that could remain
29 open to fishing. So, these changes reflect the impact
30 analysis that was presented in February that showed for
31 some areas -- that showed that there could be a risk of
32 the fleet moving into areas with higher chum in Western
33 Alaska, chum bycatch with the smaller corridor closures.
34 So, this approach also allows for some areas to remain
35 open, and it's intended to provide flexibility for
36 smaller vessels based on safety considerations.

37
38 Next slide. So, those are the
39 alternatives. I have three slides here that capture some
40 high-level points within the analysis. And I wanted to
41 bring these forward to the RAC because some -- they may
42 have some kind of counterintuitive results, and it may
43 inform the RAC consideration of the proposed
44 alternatives. So, this slide highlights that not all
45 chum salmon that are being caught as bycatch in the
46 pollock fishery originate from Western Alaska. They
47 originate from countries all across the North Pacific
48 Rim, Asia, Russia, other parts of Alaska and the Pacific
49 Northwest. They include hatchery chum from some of those
50 locations, and we also have some of the extra slides,

1 point to more of this information. But so, the black
2 bars in this figure demonstrate the total chum salmon
3 bycatch in the pollock fishery from all sources and the
4 blue bars are chum salmon caught as bycatch that were
5 estimated to be of Western Alaska origin. So, from
6 Kotzebue Sound down to Bristol Bay and on the Middle and
7 Upper Yukon. So, a hard cap on the total chum salmon
8 places, a cap on the upper limit of the number of chum
9 that can be caught as bycatch. So, it either motivates
10 the fleet to lower that black bar, or it would be a
11 ceiling for it. When they reach that cap, they would be
12 required to stop fishing. What's less clear is what
13 happens to the blue bar with a cap on all chum. So, the
14 analysis needs to consider what would fishermen do
15 before a cap is met? So, the incentive structure created
16 by the hard cap for fishermen could be to go to areas
17 with the lowest rates, lowest encounters of all chum
18 salmon, not necessarily where the lowest historical
19 Western Alaska chum salmon have been. So, these
20 incentives to fish differently, as well as the cap
21 amounts, among other factors, could affect the scope of
22 potential reductions when we're focused on Western
23 Alaska chum salmon. If the reductions in Western Alaska
24 chum salmon bycatch occur, and they result -- as a result
25 of any of the action alternatives that are being
26 considered, and those changes increase the number of
27 Western Alaska chum salmon returning to their natal
28 systems, there could be much broader benefits. And this
29 is another area where we worked with the tribal
30 cooperating agencies to characterize some of these types
31 of benefits that could manifest. The analysis also
32 captured some of the other intervening variables that
33 add another layer of uncertainty and complexity in
34 whether these benefits would be realized.

35
36 Another consideration raised in the
37 analysis is the timing of chum and Western Alaska chum
38 encounters on the fishing grounds during the B season,
39 and how they're different from encounters with chinook.
40 Chum, in Western Alaska chum are more prevalent on the
41 fishing grounds from June to mid-August. But chinook
42 encounters increase in September and October. So, this
43 dynamic can create challenges if the fleet is responding
44 to increased chum salmon bycatch avoidance by delaying
45 the start of their B season if they're moving more
46 frequently or taking more stand downs, and it ends up
47 pushing them further later into the fall. There's a
48 possibility of increased chinook salmon bycatch rates.
49 The Council is also legally required to balance costs
50 and benefits of a proposed action that would implement

1 regulatory changes. The analysis uses different methods
2 to evaluate the potential adverse impacts of costs on
3 the pollock industry and communities, and some of that
4 scope is captured in this slide.

5
6 This slide provides an overview of other
7 changes the Council made to the proposed alternatives
8 in February. I wasn't planning to walk through these
9 bullets in detail, but the full motion is available on
10 the E-agenda, there's a link here. I think Nissa has
11 some copies and we're happy to speak more to it and I'm
12 sure Council members can answer questions from the most
13 recent motion as well. Next slide, please. So, wrapping
14 up, this is the tentative timeline moving forward. The
15 Council recommended that analysts revise the document
16 based on changes in input in February and for NMFS to
17 publish the revised document as a draft EIS. Right now,
18 that document is tentatively being planned for
19 publication in August. Then there would be a 60-day
20 public comment period, and this would be the next first
21 opportunity for written input. The August publication
22 date reflects the time needed to accommodate a final
23 recommendation being made by the Council in December
24 2025. Pending the Council's action at that time, we'd
25 expect the agency, National Marine Fisheries Service,
26 to begin the rulemaking or reg writing process. Next
27 slide. So, here are other ways to get connected if you
28 want to learn more about the issue. You can always reach
29 out to Kate or myself. We have our email addresses that
30 were listed at the beginning of the slide deck and as I
31 mentioned, there's quite a few extra slides in the
32 packet. Happy to talk more or speak to any of those and
33 also happy to answer questions.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, Council
36 members have questions of the presentation? Oh, Tommy.

37
38 MR. KRISKA: I am just following along
39 here and seems like you guys have a lot of information
40 about your bycatch, your numbers, the salmon that caught
41 and everything like that. I was just writing a little
42 bit so, so much info and seems like you guys know your
43 numbers and are -- and that are used to write up your
44 presentation here, and -- but still, we don't even have
45 salmon at all for the last seven years, and I don't know
46 if it's too late or you keep on waiting till 2025 to
47 redo some of your recommendations or whatever you try.
48 I'm just kinda lost, maybe baffled a little bit about
49 this whole thing. I sure like to have salmon. Thank you.
50

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1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you. Any
2 other questions or comments? Questions or comments, Tim?

3
4 MR. GERVAIS: Not at this time, Jack.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. So, my
7 questions go back to -- under, you know, alternatives
8 one. It shows a chum salmon savings area, small pink
9 area. This correlates to the highest incidence of take
10 in north of the peninsula in the B season. So, it's very
11 apparent I -- that that's a critical area that should -
12 - and alternatives. The various alternatives show that
13 there could be some inshore areas in gray that could be
14 fished in option 1.1 here. But the reality is, the
15 (distortion) returning from the North Pacific are moving
16 through the South Alaska Peninsula. The caps should be
17 revolved around the corridor that the (distortion)I feel
18 that these options one and one-one that's for
19 alternative five, is a very important aspect of trying
20 to get this passage through without -- the -- my main
21 questions revolve around -- I don't know if your staff
22 actually has the answers to them are, if the -- if in
23 the B season option one is implemented, there's complete
24 closure during that time, when the option is -- when the
25 fishery is released in August, the Pollock are still
26 there aren't they? And so, you just harvest the fish
27 that would've been caught earlier in the season. You're
28 just displacing the harvest timing. But the fleet will
29 amass on that once that's open again. So, I don't see
30 where that's gonna [sic] be a hardship to have option
31 of alternatives five option one as the corridor that's
32 closed when we have chinook or coho moving through there.
33 And so, then when they're re -- continue the season that
34 it's wide open that the fishery can be fishing the
35 western portion of their area outside the option one
36 alternatives five and then they move on to that and they
37 still harvest the fish. We were trying to get every last
38 fish on the spawning ground. We're hardly getting any
39 escapements into the spawning grounds. So, that's our
40 problem. So, there's -- that's not that the fleet is
41 completely precluded from fishing. They can fish the
42 western portion of their shelf area that they're fishing
43 on. When that -- when the fish have stopped moving
44 through, they just move on to that sector, and they'll
45 amass on that, and they'll take that. Take a large
46 portion of the harvest, will be after the critical period
47 of passage of -- it's not just the chum that's also the
48 cohos2 are passing through there also. And so, you know,
49 we're getting passage of chinook that are coming through
50 or they're a little earlier in the season, but still

1 they're still (distortion) chinook that come in shore,
2 seven in the late July, early August. So, I don't -- I
3 feel that you have developed some corridor of remedies
4 here. I think that there's times when you can - but the
5 caps you know the -- I -- another one of my questions
6 is, your -- the caps of 100 to 300,000 or whatever it
7 was, whatever it's those caps levels, those -- that's
8 for the whole sector? The -- that's the entire of bycatch
9 or is it just strictly the problem area? Is the cap?

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UNIDENTIFIED: Mr. Chair, I can answer that last question first. So, there are different caps that are being considered under different alternatives. So, under alternatives two, that's an overall cap across the entire Bering Sea for all sectors. So, those numbers would be -- that are being looked at are 100,000 to 550 and -- 550,000 and those numbers would be divided among the four sectors. If a sector met its cap, it would be closed for the rest of the season. So, that's the overall cap option. Alternative three is similar, if it's in place triggered by abundance, and then alternative five, including the new version of it, is a cap for a specific corridor. The chum that accrue to that cap are chum that are caught in that area, and it would close that area until September 1st. So, the fleet could continue to fish outside of it during that period. Or they could wait and fish after September 1st in that area.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. So, I feel - personally I feel that that's the viable option. But I've seen the various alternatives with all different kinds of programs. And so, then they start mixing and matching things. And so, I feel that the corridor is the fish in question. Those are AYK stocks that are trying to get into either Bristol Bay or all the way up into the -- into Norton Sound. So, that's the corridor of passage. So, we should be -- the Council should be focusing on that particular area. Yeah, there's not enough genetic work and so, I think that the Council should talk to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game about instituting additional chum salmon genetic passage through the South Alaska Peninsula, Shumagin Island fisheries so that we know what stocks specifically. They were doing a little bit of that work, but that's not happened recently. Am I still correct on that one, Tim Gervais? There's not a lot of genetic stocks being -- genetic work being done in that where the destination of these fish. I took samples from chum salmon on the Koyukuk River. I know we have a DNA profile for the Yukon River stock -- systems. So, we got -- and so, we

1 have these genetic profiles. We need to know, to help
2 you analyze which stocks are being primarily targeted.
3 We need better genetic stock -- genetic analysis
4 (indiscernible) in the South Alaska Peninsula is here -
5 - is your sample. That's where you're gonna [sic] get
6 your samples from, cause sic] they have this bycatch of
7 chum in the South Alaska sockeye salmon fishery. So, I
8 do feel that there's some data lacking there. Also,
9 there's some huge questions about where these chums go
10 in the North Pacific? Where are they all going out there?
11 Are they -- where are they actually all feeding? There's
12 a huge difference between a fall chum salmon and a summer
13 chum salmon. A fall chum salmon doesn't really even
14 hardly look like a summer chum, now you cut salmon --
15 plenty of salmon to ask these people right here, they
16 cut them all the time. Summer chums are either yellow
17 or pale colored meat, whereas fall chums got pink --
18 real nice, pink to red, as red as a sockeye. So, they're
19 feeding in, they're feeding higher and they're getting
20 more keratin somewheres [sic]. Where are these various
21 stocks? We have two different stocks. It's not just
22 overall, you know, chums are chums. There's fall chums
23 and summer chums, and summer chums came in a little
24 stronger this year than the fall chums. Fall chums were
25 almost non-existent this year on the Yukon River. So,
26 there's a real need for information about what -- where
27 these chum salmon are going in the North Pacific. And
28 the Council, the North Pacific Fisheries Management
29 Council needs to really get involved with addressing
30 this overutilization, this over pasturing of hatchery
31 fish on the Pacific Ocean, it's affecting the wild
32 stocks. And so, when the stocks are in suppressed state,
33 people start screaming because we can't fish. Yet we
34 know little about what this hatchery release is doing
35 and it's apparent there's some studies around. I agree,
36 I'm reading different ones right now. I've had to go to
37 this meeting, but there's rhymes and reasons. There's
38 scientific basis of how the alternating cycles of pink
39 salmon naturally affect the wild stock fish. They have
40 odd years. The high numbers of pink salmon highly affect
41 the coho salmon and suppress the coho salmon and on the
42 low pink salmon cycle that allows the cohos to survive
43 at a higher rate. So, that's why you get an alternating
44 cycle on coho. And so, then we get -- you get into this
45 whole hatchery -- static hatchery release of the Alaskan
46 hatcheries. Washington State is releasing on an
47 alternate year. They have a 200 million release one year
48 on the high year. And they have a blank year, but we're
49 not doing that in Alaska. We're just statically
50 releasing across the board millions, hundreds of

1 millions, 750 million pink salmon, which is on a static
2 release, is having a giant effect and it's having a
3 delirious [sic] effect on the wild pink salmon, also.
4 And so, you need to know more about you know, that
5 somebody else's jurisdiction. No, you need to know more
6 about these fish so that we, as in your realm, the
7 pollock fleet is getting beat up because of bycatch. But
8 that's because the low returns. If we had more healthier
9 returns, you wouldn't hear nearly that. You'd modulate
10 the problem; you'd turn the squelch down. So, those are
11 my comments. There is lots of data lacks [sic], you have
12 a ton of data lacks [sic]. You don't know where these
13 chum salmon are really over rearing at. We know that
14 they pass through the Bering Sea eating jellyfish and
15 stuff as smoke. But then they go off and where do they
16 go? And we got two different stocks, we got summer chum
17 and fall chums. So, you got to differentiate between
18 that. Some have higher years, and some have not so good
19 years and some -- so there's a bunch of data lacks [sic].
20 I wanted to put all those data lacks [sic] on the record
21 for the Councils to direct your staff on NOAA or NMFS
22 or whoever it may be. You know, there's trophic. I know
23 that NOAA does those trophic inventories of the North
24 Pacific. They basically know how much plankton is in the
25 water and can calculate the trophic level. When you got
26 marine birds washing up on the beach, that means that's
27 the canary in the mine. That means that the ocean is in
28 decline. That's when we should've -- as Alaskans, I will
29 say we should've cut our hatchery release in half when
30 we had marine birds washing up on the beach, period. It
31 stressed the entire -- all stocks, even the hatchery
32 fish are coming back really small. They're all stressed.
33 They don't have the fat reserves. They're flying sockeye
34 salmon out of Bristol Bay and out to these villages and
35 people are saying, I don't like these fish, they're
36 really skinny. Yeah, have you ever -- have you gotten
37 any of the sockeye from this year? 3.8-pound sockeye on
38 Bristol Bay. They have hardly any fat reserves. I don't
39 even know if they've made destination up for spawning.
40 Those things are nothing. I fished in Bristol Bay for
41 years; two ocean fish are typically five two to five six
42 and three ocean fish are generally five eight to six
43 eight. That's what -- and they got large -- especially
44 adult males got large fat reserves. People here are
45 getting these little, teeny skinny fish that are,
46 they're over competing among themselves, and they're
47 also over competing with a lot of hatchery pinks. So,
48 there's a lot of data lack [sic] and so, I think that
49 the Council should start investigating. I am fully in
50 support of option five, and I'm fully in support of

1 option one on the amount of time and I think the cap
2 should be geared strictly to the area of passage, the
3 area that the chums are gonna [sic] go through. That's
4 just me. I felt that I had to speak to this Council
5 while we had them sitting at the table, cause [sic] I
6 don't have the time to travel. I live in the Brooks
7 Range. It's hard for me to leave, to get out and talk.
8 So, you're not taking testimony, you're not under
9 quorum. But I think that you should think there -- you
10 should mold these things over in your head. You got
11 real, really involved fishery people, I'm really happy
12 to see the make-up of the Council, and I'm really happy
13 to see that we have fishery people that understand fish.
14 Not a lot of people understand fish. But there's some
15 real issues going on here. I'm concerned that we'll go
16 to endangered species status, and somebody's gonna [sic]
17 close down the entire corridor forever or whatever. And
18 so, I don't want to see that. I don't want to see it;
19 we're already in crisis. We're not getting enough
20 spawning escapement right now. And then we don't have
21 enough trophic in the in system. We're not getting enough
22 feed of nutrients in the in system to support chinook
23 and the stocks that stay in the river for two years,
24 one- and two-years chinook and coho, they stay in the
25 river. If you don't have a lot of chums coming back,
26 we're not -- our Upper Yukon is going to go flat cause
27 we can't -- we don't -- we're not actually going to be
28 able to raise smolt anymore if we don't have enough
29 nutrient flow into the freshwater system. So, there's a
30 lot of problems here. I can really empathize with what
31 you got to wrestle with, but I think you're on the right
32 track for these closure areas with alternative five. Any
33 other input to the Council? Robert.

34
35 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I did
36 testify when I was down in Anchorage here at the North
37 Pacific fisheries. And I kind of brought up today in our
38 meeting that we're looking at some of our side streams
39 on the Yukon. There's no more chinook salmon there, where
40 there would be like 1,500, maybe 2,000 that we could go
41 and spawn. They're gone, they're not there anymore and
42 being a food base for what I talk about, that's all I
43 deal with, is food for our tribal people. I don't deal
44 with money, any -- that's somebody else's job to do, and
45 I spoke for the animals, so. When we do talk something
46 like this, I brought it up saying that maybe our tribe
47 is looking at something where we would have to put a
48 resolution or something into the North Pacific fishery
49 and also the Eastern Interior and Western Interior. I'm
50 saying that we're gonna [sic] have to take a hard look

1 at saying the chum salmon and the chinook salmon are
2 gonna [sic] be extinct and this is where we're going
3 now. Everything we got here for last ten years has went
4 downhill. Our food source now, not only for Anvik but,
5 the other communities too. You're looking at dry streams
6 now, no more fish. We have a fishing lodge up above
7 Anvik. Every year they bring in 100 to 200 fishermen and
8 they have jet boats with 200 to 300 horsepower, engines
9 that would tear up all this gravel and people have
10 brought to our attention that we have passed on, that
11 they're digging up all the salmon, eggs, the roe. You
12 go to the ripples, it's just red light, unbelievable.
13 So, I heard -- this is a hard thing for tribal people
14 too because we have a right to eat. That's our way of
15 life. We don't have Fred Meyer's cars right down in our
16 street here. We don't have anything a lot, just a lot
17 of basic food, with the store with basic material for
18 the people. Coffee is \$22 a pound, a gallon of gas is
19 between \$7, \$7.50 and \$9 a gallon, depending what kind
20 of octane you want to get. So, where do we go from here?
21 Look at the animals, they're the ones that are suffering,
22 too. We had to shoot over 30 bears in two years. For
23 what reason? There's no more food for them and this is
24 true. We don't want to shoot them, for 10,000 years
25 there was a mutual agreement with tribal people. We don't
26 bother you; they don't bother us and it was just a
27 natural thing but now it's not natural, an upset a
28 balance has been done to our side streams. And even when
29 the chum salmon has died, spawned out, and they float
30 along the shore. You'll go see ducks, mother ducks with
31 their baby ducks that go up that salmon, open it up and
32 they (indiscernible) that juice out. And they teach
33 their young ones how to do that. That's nutrition for
34 them, that's food, even in death, they're still giving
35 life. So, I mean, you know, we have a way of looking at
36 things. This is how we are, the bottom line, and if you
37 can't help us by doing a seven-year moratorium on the
38 Bering Sea, I'm not threatening you. This is pretty hard,
39 so.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Robert, I would
42 like to ask you a question. You're talking of these --
43 I want this Council to review these options, and I want
44 -- I would like to ask to write a letter to your North
45 Pacific Fisheries Management Council with our
46 discussions that we're having here. But I would like -
47 I -- we're not gonna [sic] write the letter until we get
48 more public comment tomorrow. So, we gotta [sic] get
49 more wider [sic], we gotta [sic] you know, we're gonna
50 [sic] [sic] hear all sides of this issue, and then we're

1 gonna [sic] -- would like to write a letter to your
2 Council in regards to this thing. So, this Council is
3 supposed to be focusing tonight on these options here.

4

5 MR. WALKER: Okay, just one more thing.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Robert.

8

9 MR. WALKER: You know the Fish
10 Commissioner, Doug Lang. I know you guys know him. He's
11 the one that came to us and said, we're doing a seven-
12 year moratorium on Yukon River, without even consulting
13 the tribes or anybody. It was just, here we are, this
14 is what it is and this is what's gonna [sic] happen, so.
15 And that really put the knife where it really hurts. So,
16 that's just something, like what I said down in -- and
17 I testified. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, members
18 of your Council.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Robert.
21 So, you'll withhold your opinion about these options
22 until later on in our meeting to where we -- I would
23 like this Council to write a letter of recommendation
24 to your North Pacific Fisheries Management Council.
25 That's what I would like this Council to do. And so, Don
26 you're willing to look at this a little further tomorrow,
27 and we're gonna [sic] write a letter about these options.
28 Are you.....

29

30 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair, certainly, I mean,
31 well, earlier, I guess maybe Krystal mentioned it in
32 bringing this whole thing, the options, the overview of
33 those things and options. And so, I guess it didn't
34 actually come from TCC. It actually came from North
35 Pacific. Okay. So, I'm a little confused about this and
36 so, I was asking about what the -- is there timelines
37 on this thing, or are you posing to us to choose one of
38 the options or what? How does that actually work? I
39 mean, it's kinda confusing to me. I mean, because I
40 didn't realize that you had four distinct areas in the
41 State, right? Exactly, I mean, the Beaufort Sea on down
42 or something like that. So yeah, I would like a little
43 more clarification on that. And certainly, I'm willing
44 to, you know I might put in my own opinion too, but
45 maybe it, maybe that's not what we're after here. But I
46 would like to know that and you know, just as a thought
47 here, you know, heck we were right. Met 10, 15 years
48 ago, and we gave up and I guess the whole river gave up
49 the kings. But we always, always you know, had that fall
50 chum 500, 700,000 down to 200, whatever. So, any kind

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1 of option that we -- if somebody could explain to me,
2 Mr. Chair, what are we doing? Are we taking one of the
3 alternatives, or is this time sensitive? You know what
4 I mean? Thank you.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Staff. Sarah or
7 Katie?

8

9 MS. HAAPALA: Yeah, sure. Through the
10 Chair. So, Kate, with Council staff I think I can take
11 this on, and I'm happy to have Sarah jump in, and Council
12 members can, too. But the gist of what we're trying to
13 do here is to talk about the Council's process and how
14 it makes decisions and then also this existing action
15 for chum salmon bycatch management in the Bering Sea
16 pollock fishery. And so, yes, the Council has before it
17 five different alternatives or basically four different
18 ways to change the existing bycatch regulations. So,
19 alternatives one that Sarah walked through is what
20 exists in regulation now and then. The four other
21 alternatives are ways that the Council is considering
22 changing those alternatives. Sarah and I, our job is to
23 analyze the impacts of those different regulatory
24 changes. So, on environmental components, economic
25 components, social and cultural components and what that
26 looks like. So, at the outreach meeting and what we're
27 doing today, I don't think we, the Council or staff are
28 asking for the RAC to pick an option or an alternatives.
29 That's your prerogative. You can write a letter to the
30 Council and weigh in on that and that's part of why we
31 have slides at the back of this presentation that Sarah
32 provided that indicate different ways that you can be
33 involved and how to do that and what the timeline of the
34 action is. But it's also a time for the RAC to have
35 dialogue and discourse with North Pacific Fishery
36 Management Council members as well as staff. So, if you
37 have technical questions about the analysis or timeline
38 and process, we can answer those things. Other questions
39 might be appropriate for Council members, but I'm not
40 sure if that helps us or helps you.

41

42 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: My question is, are
43 -- what is -- we want to write a letter and what is our
44 timeline to get that letter in?

45

46 MS. HAAPALA: So, if the RAC would like
47 to write a letter to the North Pacific Fishery Management
48 Council, the next opportunity for that letter to be
49 received would be at the Council meeting during either
50 final action, or if you were to submit your letter on

1 the agency's publication of the draft EIS. So, at this
2 point in time, the draft EIS would be published in mid-
3 August. That's the tentative for the goal timeline. So,
4 then would begin a 60-day public comment period window
5 and you could provide a letter through the -- to the
6 agency at that time. In addition, another letter may be
7 provided to the Council at final action, which at this
8 point is scheduled for December 2025. So, right now,
9 after the February action, Sarah and I, our job is to
10 analyze the new alternatives, option 1, 1.1 that we were
11 talking about earlier, and then publish that and bring
12 it back.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I see why you have
15 1.1, but, if the large fleet is fished in the B season
16 outside of the savings area, let's just call it option
17 one savings area. Then you can prioritize the in-shore
18 fleet to have more exclusive use of the in-shore in the
19 squares there when it opens later on. And so, I feel
20 that the in-shore fleet, you know you got these -- but
21 that's right where the travel is. I mean, that's actually
22 where the travel is. You know, in option 1.1. So, the
23 economic impact to them would be lessened if you
24 allocated them to a higher use during the opening after
25 September 1st. Go ahead, Steve.

26
27 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you. I -- Mr. Honea,
28 your question was a good one. You had a similar reaction
29 to what I did when I first saw this as an individual
30 Council member and saw the analysis in the packet was
31 given to us. I have gotten to the point where you view
32 this as a -- it's a broad range of alternatives. You'll
33 notice each of those alternatives have got -- the cap
34 ones have broad ranges of numbers, and the areas are
35 broad. What we're trying to do here is provide that
36 range of options that then, in some cases they can be
37 mixed matched, some cases they can't. But look at it as
38 the ingredient -- I know this may not be the best
39 example, but it's an ingredient to a pie that you're
40 trying to put together and there are parts and pieces.
41 Some will make it work; some will make it so that you'd
42 like it, and some of it maybe not so much. But I mean,
43 that's -- it's a range to try and give you and us as
44 individual members of the Council an opportunity to look
45 and in the end hopefully arrive at something that works.
46 You made one comment, Mr. Chair, about genetics, and you
47 were mentioning at our February meeting, we had a fairly
48 extensive report on some of the genetic work that was
49 being done with the fleet and out in the Bering Sea. And
50 it was encouraging, there's some very interesting things

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1 coming. I don't think we're quite there yet, in my
2 personal opinion. The silver bullet isn't quite there
3 yet, but the improvements in our ability to understand
4 genetics and hopefully someday get it down where it will
5 be able to do it real time or not, I don't know. But get
6 it down so that we can use it to make some decisions
7 about some of these things. It's coming, I don't think
8 it's there yet, but it's coming.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Alright.

11

12 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, thank you.

13

14 MR. GERVAIS: Mr. Chair, may I comment?

15

16 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Let's let Tim talk
17 for a second. Tim.

18

19 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
20 is Tim Gervais. In recent discussions we've had with Dr.
21 Stram, within the last two years, she was indicating
22 that to get the genetic information on salmon bycatch
23 can take upwards of two to three months. And at the
24 time, she was saying that it was already been established
25 that with like, to test fisheries, genetic test
26 fisheries that's going on in Bristol Bay. They're doing
27 the genetic testing on the catcher vessel. They know
28 within 16 to 24 hours with the -- what the genetic stock
29 is of the sample. So, that was distressing to hear that,
30 you know, a fishery that's supposed to be guided by best
31 available science. Your genetics is, I don't know if
32 it's purposefully delayed or what, but really, to say
33 that it takes over a month or over two months to get
34 genetic feedback on what you're catching when the other
35 genetic work on salmon in the State is occurring within
36 24 hours is unacceptable. And we -- all these like --
37 this Council represents Western Interior of Alaska so,
38 Koyukuk River, Yukon River, Kuskokwim River. All the
39 residents and users in this region are -- had a really
40 bad experience with the Council's, North Pacific
41 Management Council's response to king salmon. I'm sorry,
42 but when the local term in Western Alaska for chinook
43 is king salmon. So, the purpose of this discussion would
44 be interchangeable. We basically went from a viable king
45 salmon fishery where subsistence's were met. There were
46 some commercial fishing going on, and now we have
47 moratorium, and it doesn't even look like within the
48 lifetime of anybody sitting on the Western Interior
49 Council that chum salmon stock or excuse me, king salmon
50 stock would be able to return so that is -- as this

1 Council has written in previous letters to the North
2 Pacific Management Council, direct violations of
3 National standard eight communities and National
4 Standard nine on bycatch. And it feels like to these
5 villages and subsistence users that the main attempt of
6 the actions taken with salmon conservation for the North
7 Pacific Fisheries Management Council is to delay action
8 or take very little action. Try to allow the trawl fleet
9 to continue business as usual, as much as possible and
10 the meantime, our stocks are getting destroyed. The chum
11 salmon stock was always a backup fishery. The most
12 significant part of our subsistence economy in Western
13 Alaska was king salmon fishery and that's gone, that's
14 off the table. Our older age classes, seven-year-old,
15 eight-year-old age classes, the kings are biologically
16 extinct, okay. We as a country, as a State, have
17 completely failed in maintaining the viability of that
18 salmon stock. And now, as our backup source of salmon
19 now we're getting closures with this and I'm not seeing
20 a sense of urgency from North Pacific Management
21 Council. Like, there's -- I've heard other Council
22 members such as like Mr. Tweet or Tweit -- I'm sorry, I
23 don't -- I can't remember the correct pronunciation on
24 his name. Talking for the State of Washington and saying
25 that the amount of money that's invested in the
26 harvesting sector and the processing sector is so much
27 that we can't afford to slow that back. But from our
28 perspective, for the economy for the people that live
29 on these communities along the rivers, we basically lost
30 40% of our subsistence economy, with these depletion
31 of salmon stocks. So, I think I would like all the Council
32 members and the Council staff to understand that there's
33 way more involved with communities and economies that
34 just how many million dollars your boat is, or how many
35 billion dollars of surimi or whatever they call that
36 McDonald's fish sandwich. That's in my opinion, in the
37 opinion of people who live on the river. That's -- those
38 economic impacts are not as great as the economic
39 distress that these communities have felt. I mean, it's
40 more than just calories, it's the quality of calories.
41 These king salmon stocks, chum salmon stocks, they're -
42 - they represent where we can get high quality lipids
43 in the diet. The alternatives foods available that are
44 in these community stores or come into the tribal
45 Councils in these villages through the USDA food
46 program. Those are not acceptable replacements for food
47 that's low calorie, ultra-high processed, highly refined
48 foods that create a lot of sickness and mental health
49 problems for the residents of our area. I also --
50 throughout the years -- I mean, we've been for decades,

1 we've been trying to get North Pacific Management
2 Council to be more aware of and more reactive to salmon
3 conservation and we just, we seem -- when we've talked
4 previous meetings where North Pacific Management Council
5 comes to meet our RAC or other RACs along the river that
6 -- excuse me, I just, okay. They've just not been willing
7 to understand the extent of our -- of the depletion of
8 -- the extent of the cultural and economic impact of
9 having our main subsistence resources taken away from
10 us. So, we've heard a lot in previous years where Council
11 members or North Pacific Management Council members are
12 saying, well, we're not responsible for what happens in
13 the river environments like the three, inside three
14 miles and in the rivers. Like, literally when Dr. Stram
15 was presenting salmon information to the Council in 2009
16 over Amendment 91, they -- she said there was absolutely
17 no analysis of in-river salmon stocks. And I would
18 really like the -- some kind of memorandum of
19 understanding or some kind of agreement made where,
20 instead of what we've had up to this time, where National
21 Marine Fisheries Service, North Pacific Management
22 Council saying that's when the salmon hit net fresh
23 water, they're out of our jurisdiction. And then from
24 our side, the Western Interior Regional Advisory
25 Council. When we talked to the Federal Subsistence Board
26 or have correspondence with Secretary of Interior or
27 through our -- shoot, I lost the -- our legal counsel.
28 I can't remember what -- Mr. Chair, what's the official
29 name for our legal adviser?

30
31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: You mean for the
32 Office of Subsistence Management? That would've been Ken
33 Lord.

34
35 MR. GERVAIS: No, but what's the position
36 called? Solicitor. The solicitor saying that anything,
37 any actions that are available for us to take they don't
38 -- like based on ANILCA, they don't apply to what happens
39 in the EEZ. And what really needs to happen is the chum
40 salmon stock and the king salmon stocks, they need to,
41 they need full life cycle protection and need to get out
42 of this mode of whether it falls under jurisdiction of
43 Department of Interior, Department of Commerce, that
44 switching jurisdictions is creating a lapse in the
45 protection and conservation that's necessary to maintain
46 these stocks correctly. I don't mean to offend any of
47 you folks. With me being critical of what's happened on
48 the North Pacific Management Council side. But we're in
49 a really desperate situation with our salmon stocks
50 because I think there's been too much emphasis on trying

1 to maximize the fishing time and the economic benefit
2 of the fishing, pollock fishing and pollock harvesting
3 sectors. And it's -- and the actual economic damage and
4 cultural damage to the individuals and communities along
5 these rivers has been ignored. And not appropriate to
6 have the Subsistence users along these rivers sitting
7 down and not fishing while a commercial fishery that
8 every day that they're out there, they're catching chum
9 salmon or king salmon are out fishing. I don't know why,
10 out of these five alternatives, why there's not an
11 alternative that says when fishermen along these,
12 Kuskokwim, Upper Yukon, Koyukuk rivers are not fishing,
13 that the BSAI trawl fleet is not fishing like that's --
14 to me, that would be an equitable thing. If we're not
15 able to fish, if we can't meet escapement goals, why is
16 salmon allowed to be harvested in the course of a
17 commercial fishery? That's about all I have for right
18 now, Mr. Chair.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: All right. My
21 question in this, on this meeting is, which of the
22 alternatives and the options are you leaning towards?
23 That's what I would like, as -- with Council members
24 here, that's what I wanna talk about. I wanna talk about
25 your options. So, which of the options are you leaning
26 towards? We're gonna [sic] for -- I would like to
27 formulate a letter that's going to be transmitted by
28 August 15th immediately to get it in the hopper. And so,
29 but I want, I would like to -- we're talking about this
30 issue right now. I'm encouraged that North Pacific
31 Fisheries Management Council even has these kinds of
32 options before us. And so, I'm encouraged by that. I do
33 feel -- I feel strongly that there should be complete
34 closure. But you should prioritize the small vessel
35 fleet as to have an opportunity to harvest at a higher
36 rate in the -- in this closure area, in these -- in the
37 saving -- this savings area. But I do feel that this is
38 on the right track. I do feel that we need to talk about
39 this on the record. So, what do you think about the
40 various options, Tim? That's the question before us
41 tonight. I'm sure the Council is aware of the impacts
42 of the lack of fish. They probably heard that a lot. So,
43 I -- do you have a opinion about alternatives before us?
44 Then you have the have the document online, you're
45 looking at it. You're still there, Tim?

46
47 MR. GERVAIS: This is Tim, I was trying
48 to unmute.
49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. So, I want
2 you to kind of like basically which op[sic] -- which of
3 the alternatives are you leaning towards and what are
4 the options. And what I don't see here is I see on page
5 18, slide 18, I would guess you would call it, it shows
6 option one, option 1.1 and option 2. But I don't see a
7 diagram for option two. What -- why is that?

8
9 MR. HAAPALA: The reason that there is
10 no diagram for option two is because that's a -- it's a
11 very different management structure. So, the way that
12 option two would be set up is that it would be managed
13 under the incentive plan agreements. And so, the options
14 -- if I'm remembering rightly, are to have 50% or 75%
15 of the corridor area closed and the stat areas or the
16 small gray boxes that you see within the figure that
17 would close would be determined by the Incentive Plan
18 Agreements submitted to NMFS for review and approval
19 prior to the season. They could not be changed within
20 season, but they could change over time. And the reason
21 for that is because the chum salmon savings area and the
22 chinook salmon savings area. We've only spoken to the
23 chum salmon savings area today, but that exists as a
24 backstop measure, and the rolling hotspot program was
25 developed because it -- environmental conditions and
26 fishing conditions on the grounds changed. So, encounter
27 rates were higher here outside of the chum salmon savings
28 area as opposed to within it. So, the Council's rationale
29 and sorry Council members, you can -- I'm used to having
30 to answer questions, but the rationale for that is to
31 try and provide some flexibility as conditions may
32 change in the future. So, we don't have a diagram that
33 we can provide you because those areas would be selected
34 by the IPAs. And I think that's -- yeah, I think
35 that.....

36
37 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That answers my
38 question. But the -- but that still begs the question
39 if the encounter rate is higher outside the savings area,
40 wouldn't that be the Western Asian stocks that -- those
41 are 75% of the hard take. But, what we -- what we're
42 trying to protect in the savings area is the stocks
43 moving through this you know, B season and you know, we
44 want to protect those stocks, that's the objective. So,
45 rolling it around or having any kind of harvest inside
46 of there is counterproductive (indiscernible) it's my
47 impression and my opinion that pollock do not move off
48 of their grounds. They're gonna [sic] be there when it
49 opens on September 1, you could fish it through November
50 the rest of the B season. You're fishing before then

1 when the chums aren't there. The reality is, we want
2 protection of the returning stocks cause [sic] we have
3 limited returns. So, we're trying to save everyone. The
4 fishery, the fleet will still be able to harvest the
5 fish, they'll amass on the savings area after it opens,
6 you know, they will, I would. Those fish when they'll
7 open that closed area, I'll be on top of it. So, the
8 reality is - yes, go ahead, Anne.

9
10 MS. VANDERHOEVEN: Thank you. Pollock do
11 actually move quite a bit over the course of the year,
12 over the course of the season and over the course of
13 their size and age. And so, that's why the fleet moves
14 as much as it does, in or annually and even within the
15 season. Part of the problem with -- all of these
16 alternatives have benefits and disadvantages, right? And
17 one of the issues with the corridor concept, yes, you
18 could close down that cluster area for the time period.
19 Even with allowing for some near shore opportunities for
20 smaller vessels that operationally can't get out beyond
21 the cluster area. You can't get all of the fish in in
22 time when that cluster closure releases on September 1.
23 At that point fish have scattered, we rely on pollock
24 being schooled up to be able to harvest them efficiently.
25 When we harvest efficiently, we have less bycatch.
26 There's not enough time in the season, the season closes
27 November 1 so, if you push off half the season to later
28 in the year, you're not necessarily gonna [sic] be able
29 to get it all in. And when you fish later in the season
30 in September and October, you're likely to encounter
31 more chinook and more herring in the bycatch. And that's
32 something that we're also trying to avoid. So, those are
33 some of the tradeoffs that we're trying to evaluate when
34 we look at alternative five. Each of the action
35 alternatives have different tradeoffs that we have to
36 evaluate and that's where our amazing staff does a great
37 job helping us understand those impacts through their
38 analysis. But each of them have their tradeoffs that we
39 have to evaluate.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, the B season
42 would be the fleet's premier time to fish, and especially
43 during that time frame, that's when the main cluster is.
44 In the warm water, they cluster in the summer season
45 more. Is the -- is there a food resource flowing through
46 there, why the pollock would be more concentrated in
47 these savings areas at that time?

48
49 MS. VANDERHOEVEN: It's not necessarily
50 that they're concentrated there. For example, the

1 offshore fleets, the mothership fleet and the catcher
2 processor fleet can't even legally fish in a lot of that
3 area during the B season. They're closed out because
4 it's set aside for the smaller inshore catcher vessels
5 to be able to harvest. You don't always know when you're
6 gonna [sic] find fish, you know, 6 hours outside of town
7 or 36 hours outside of town. And so, with the rolling
8 hotspot system and the communication on the grounds
9 within the fleet, because it's a rationalized fishery,
10 it's not a race for fish anymore, there's more
11 communication on the grounds. We've used the rolling
12 hotspot system to reduce how much salmon we're getting.
13 We're also balancing, you know, herring is another
14 limiting factor, cod can be a limiting factor, sablefish
15 can be a limiting factor. As well as, you know, can you
16 find the right size fish for what product form you need
17 to be making? So, all of these vessels have a lot of
18 different competing objectives. The inshore fleets all
19 need to have their fish back to shore within a certain
20 amount of time for fish quality issues. So, it's all
21 really complicated and that's why we rely on the analysis
22 that we get and that's part of why it takes so long in
23 our process.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, I'm happy to
26 see that you have at least some saving areas and you're
27 considering the chum bycatch. I'm happy about that. That
28 that's part of the analysis, not just herring, not just
29 the size of the pollock. It's a major problem and as
30 you're well aware. So, I -- we will still make - I --
31 you know, maybe it's depth. Maybe it's, you know, the
32 chums and the salmon are closer to the surface. They're
33 not -- it might be depth, it might be, you know, there's
34 a bunch of various things that are going on, but we're
35 -- you can just tell we're super frustrated. And so, we
36 -- we're -- I'm happy to see these options here and so,
37 your expertise will probably play out in the end and
38 with your able staff and so forth. But the -- you know
39 there's -- when does the B season open? June 10? June
40 10th?

41
42 MS. VANDERHOEVEN: The B season is June
43 10 to October 30 -- 31.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, yeah, that's
46 just as the salmon start to return through the -- they're
47 starting to move towards destination at that time. Go
48 ahead, John.

49
50

1 MR. MOLLER: Yeah. Thank you, Mr.
2 Chairman. I just want to back up a little bit here to a
3 comment you made cause [sic] I completely agree that
4 more genetics would be a helpful tool all the way around.
5 And just to elaborate a little bit more on my colleague
6 Mr. Williams here on the program that we were made aware
7 of here more recently in terms of getting better and
8 quicker genetic results. If I remember correctly, maybe
9 my fellow colleagues can remind me on the time frame
10 here. But it seemed like they were down to within a
11 five-to-seven-day turnaround time for the genetics. And
12 they're hoping to get it down to like two days in the
13 near term but last year, I believe was the first year
14 of the program. But I think there's a lot of us that are
15 hopeful that, you know, we can have some closer real
16 time data relative to the genetics because it plays right
17 into the action that the Council has in front of it
18 right now in terms of addressing the problem statement
19 of avoiding Western Alaska chum salmon. So, if we can
20 identify that on a more real time basis, it will be a
21 useful tool. Just wanted to add that.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I appreciate that,
24 you know, the Department of Fish and Game on the Yukon
25 River, they're getting -- they're making genetic
26 analysis of which stocks are which, even summer chum
27 stocks. They're making almost getting close to like
28 within I think it's close to 24 hours. They know what's
29 actually coming in. Bristol Bay is doing the same thing.
30 Like as Dr. Stram was saying several years ago that they
31 were sending samples out. And all this rigmarole, it's
32 like, well, times have changed. There can be some -- I
33 think there's some methodology, maybe that's red tape.
34 How do I know what it is. Anne.

35
36 MS. VANDERHOEVEN: Thank you. So, this
37 was the first year that BBSRI did a pilot project in
38 Dutch Harbor for the shoreside fleet, and they were.....

39
40 UNIDENTIFIED: Can you say what BBSRI is?

41
42 MS. VANDERHOEVEN: Oh, Bristol Bay Salmon
43 Research Institute. They do the Port Moller test
44 fishery, also.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON RAKOFF: Yeah.

47
48 MS. VANDERHOEVEN: So, they did a pilot
49 project this year. They had some pretty good successes.
50 It's only applicable to the inshore fleet. The offshore

1 fleet fishes too far away, and the genetic composition
2 of their bycatch over the years is consistently very
3 different from what the inshore fleet gets. There is a
4 lot of promise with the BBSRI project. They are seeking
5 additional funding. That is an ongoing issue, as it is
6 for everybody with everything and with it being a pilot
7 project, we don't know and because this was such a low
8 bycatch year for chum, we don't know if the results can
9 be replicated in years that are -- where there's a lot
10 more bycatch coming in.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah. But I do
13 think that genetic composition work, you know, when NOAA
14 is doing offshore work and, you know, they incidentally
15 catch pink and chum in their offshore trophic
16 inventories which they have -- we need to know what
17 markers those are, what -- are these AYK stocks in the
18 North Pacific. And where they're at, where they're
19 actually catching them, we need to get a little more
20 fine-tuned on when we're -- you know, they do these
21 various inventories, even the smolt out biodegrading,
22 you know, Alaska Department of Fish and Games don't work
23 with that. They need to be a little more fine-tuned to
24 this genetic work. And so, that's -- as time goes on, I
25 mean, this is almost getting real time. I mean, we're
26 getting -- so, you can tell your genetic pedigree to
27 where you came from in the world almost these days for
28 humans. And so, I think that there's -- this is a
29 critical factor of how this is gonna [sic] be, you know,
30 how you're gonna [sic] prosecute this fishery with this
31 genetic work, with whether you got a lot of AYK stocks
32 there. You might have a whole bunch of chums, but maybe
33 there's a hatchery fish from over in Siberia. How do we
34 know where the -- you know, those Asian stocks. We're
35 concerned about the AYK stocks. Yes, go ahead, Rachel.

36
37 MS. BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
38 is Rachel and I, just to sort of complement that point,
39 I think you're absolutely right about the promise of the
40 more real time genetics. But I just wanted to add that
41 the genetic information we do have for, in particular
42 chum salmon bycatch and chinook (distortion)bycatch in
43 the pollock fishery, we've had -- we've been collecting
44 that information since 2011. And so, we're getting a
45 time series, even though it's not real time and just
46 pointing out if -- I think you -- many of you in the
47 presentation are looking at the figure of alternatives
48 five, which has the option 1 and the option 1.1. Those
49 areas are based on the genetic information that shows
50 about 85% of the Western Alaska chum salmon bycatch in

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1 the pollock fishery comes from these areas. So, we're
2 basing this action on that genetic information that we
3 have in terms of the corridors that you're talking about.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I'm extremely
6 happy about that. It's just, it's intuitive that this
7 where they're at. And so, I'm -- but I super appreciate
8 your presence here to have discussions. I fully
9 empathize with the complexities of the various types of
10 fish that you're trying to avoid. But I do feel that
11 you're on the right track. So, has any other Council
12 members. Jenny, do you have anything to say about this?
13 Jenny, go ahead.

14
15 MS. PELKOLA: I'm in a daze. But anyway,
16 I testified in Anchorage, also. But when I was sitting
17 there and looking at all the members, I sort of lost my
18 train of thought. But anyway, I just want to thank you
19 all for being here and this is something that we have
20 to work out together. When I heard people testifying,
21 there were people for number one, number two, number
22 five, they were just, you know, they wanted this one and
23 they wanted that one. But for myself, I don't know that
24 much about it than -- I just want to thank Krystal for
25 the little training that I had on this, that I think, I
26 feel I don't want to be pressured into choosing something
27 that I might be sorry for later. For our area, I don't
28 know how much the counselors know about this. It's
29 something that I just recently heard, but maybe it's
30 been around for a while. And I don't know if the
31 Councils, the tribal Councils really know, you know. So,
32 I would encourage the Councils to try to get someone to
33 at least help them understand some of these options.
34 It's -- I feel sorry for your Council because, you know,
35 you've heard so many different options, people want this
36 one and people want that one. So, I don't want to be in
37 your shoes. But anyway, thank you for being here with
38 us and I think we have to work together because one of
39 these days there will be no fish for anyone. That's the
40 way I feel and that's the way it looks like it's going.
41 So, thank you again and that's just my cents.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Jenny.
44 Pollock.

45
46 MR. SIMON: Thank you, Chair. Pollock
47 Simon Sr. I live in Allakaket. I just want to take this
48 time to share some thoughts and memories with you. Well,
49 everybody working together tried to bring the fish back.
50 The salmon might come back, but not in great numbers,

1 not like it used to be. King salmon is something that
2 maybe that we enjoyed in the past. There was a time
3 when, years ago, where we were in a log cabin, hot water
4 on the wood stove for a (indiscernible) sheefish are
5 gone now. They're beyond the good memories, but I was
6 glad to see all of you people come here to talk about
7 the salmon with us. It's good, everybody working
8 together and thank you, Mr. Chair.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you,
11 Pollock. Appreciate those comments.

12
13 MR. SIMON: Yeah, I have to go. I got
14 things to do.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. And Tommy,
17 you got a comment?

18
19 MR. KRISKA: Well, I always have things
20 to say, I guess. Fish was once upon a time where my --
21 our main diet for our families. We had a lot going back
22 in the days and teaching our kids everything. I was
23 taught a lot about fish. Never taught about how to argue
24 about fish, but. I try to figure out how to keep our
25 fish. Like, I really have a heavy heart for myself, my
26 family, for all the people in interior Alaska, all over
27 in Alaska. It's sad to be sitting here, even with the
28 best of fish managers, I guess. And can't they -- they
29 gave us options and everything like that and then it's
30 like a guessing poll, guess number one or number two or
31 whatever, you might get the right one. I'm not sure,
32 it's very frustrating to be a Alaska Native and in the
33 God and the Lord's land, it's a beautiful country. But
34 you know, without the salmon and all the things that we
35 live upon and enjoy and enjoyed, it's not there anymore.
36 And I thought, oh well, maybe that's okay. At first it
37 started with the kings and then the chum, summer chum
38 then it went to the fall chum and we're down to
39 whitefish. It's really bad and then for you - I like I
40 said earlier, no offense, but for you to be sitting here
41 and giving me, telling me take a choice or what
42 alternatives you want? The only alternatives I have is
43 I -- we need some fish for the future for our kids. It's
44 --I mean, you know, if -- what if it was your kids? You
45 guys have you know, your way of fishing and everything
46 you're on that side of the line. The border line of the
47 beaches of Southeast Alaska, you're on the other side
48 of it. You have all the fish in the world, we don't have
49 that. We're on this side of it, where the fish can't
50 come through there because the too much fishing

1 commercially. I have a lot to say, and I don't really
2 want to get into you know, being the bad guy here, I'm
3 already -- I don't know how the heck I wound up the bad
4 guy at the first place. You know, the Lord, he provided
5 us with a lot of good stuff, the berries, the bears, the
6 moose, the fish, everything. We had everything. Once
7 upon a time, I used to say, you know, a lot of people
8 keep coming into college and they were -- forgot about
9 there -- that's probably possibly what happened. They
10 forgot to turn around in their country and everything
11 was there, the berries, the moose, the fish, everything.
12 All you had to do was turn around and live the lifestyle
13 that the Lord put you there for. But they all turned
14 away and went toward development and you know, the
15 industry, the money. And this is what it costs, money
16 and on that side of the line is what you're gonna [sic]
17 continue doing. You have no control over what you're
18 doing and what you're being paid for to do, to provide
19 fish for everyone else and in -- and if we had money to
20 buy fish, we'd probably be okay. But we don't have that
21 kind of choice around here. I can go on and on. I'm
22 kinda very upset that we were put in this situation and
23 you're asking us to make a decision. Why can't you guys
24 make a decision and help us? You have all the tools. You
25 have the tools, we don't. It's frustrating to be sitting
26 here and listen to -- I mean, I listened to the Board
27 of Fish, Board of Game, everybody. I don't know where
28 this -- the, you know, we talked to Board of Fish, Board
29 of Game in a lot of meetings we talked to here, right.
30 And it's supposed to be getting to Washington, D.C. that
31 stuff never gets to Washington, D.C. it runs into the
32 industry, who's making all these plans and from what I
33 see our word never gets to where it's supposed to be
34 going. So, a lot of our chiefs and everything fly
35 directly to DC, and they're asking them about the
36 questions that they were asking here. They said, what
37 questions? We never heard about this stuff. So,
38 technically it is all run into this Board and that Board
39 and slowly dwindle it, throw it in the trash or whatever.
40 I don't know where it goes, but this is -- the situation
41 that we're in and I guess -- you guys have power to do
42 things, and I really wish you would use it and do it.
43 Because.....

44

45

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Tom.

46

47

48

MR. KRISKA: I don't know, I -- like I
said, I just, I'm kind of frustrated about it, but I'm
hoping there is a way you can help us.

49

50

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Tom.
2 Again, people have -- you can feel the deep pain that
3 people have here about this whole fishery thing going
4 over a cliff. This is like thousands of years of use of
5 this resource and it's going away. They're working on
6 it, this document here shows they're working on it. They
7 were -- there was no cap, there was really no savings
8 of chum in the pollock fishery. So, I feel that this is
9 a real big step forward. I'm really happy to see that
10 the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council is
11 weighing these various options, these various things. I
12 would like, you know, the genetic analysis of the stocks
13 that are coming into the bycatch in the B season. I
14 would like to know the -- whether they're in condition
15 of maturation, are they actually spawning stock -- are
16 they spawning fish moving back to the spawning grounds.
17 That should be a consideration of you know what is this
18 bycatch, is it feeders, is it this small little, little
19 smolt or you know, small fish that are moving out? It's
20 -- there needs to be an enumeration of the maturation
21 of the fish that are moving through the savings area so
22 that your catch -- your by -- your caps are revolving
23 around the genetic analysis for AYK stocks and the
24 maturation. Those are the fish that we're looking to get
25 back on the spawning grounds. Those are some key data
26 that's gonna [sic] -- needs to be used during this whole
27 process of bycatch avoidance for spawning stocks, that's
28 what we're after. And so, that we need to look, your
29 analysis needs to be looking at that fairly closely. So,
30 I think we've covered our Council, our Councils talked
31 and Nissa you got a comment there.

32
33 MS. PILCHER: I -- this is Nissa, for the
34 record. I might have a question. It may be helpful for
35 the Council to consider the comment submitted via the
36 Federal Register versus at the meeting where they're
37 gonna [sic] be taking action. Does one hold more weight
38 or is it the same weight?

39
40 MR. VANDERHOEVEN: I don't think one
41 holds more weight than the other. They're just different
42 forms.

43
44 MS. PILCHER: And then as a -- sorry, as
45 a quick reminder that as they stated earlier, that draft
46 DAS is gonna [sic] come out mid-August for the 60 days,
47 60-day comment period, which is a ways away. Granted,
48 you guys wouldn't be meeting before then. But then
49 there's an additional option. They're gonna [sic] be
50 taking that final action in December of 2025. So, there

1 is a little bit of time. We're kind of rushed because
2 of this meeting. But we're only rushed because of our
3 time constraints. The tribes and individuals and whatnot
4 have time to look at this and consider this.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: This Council has to
7 make some kind of -- write this letter of, to you at
8 this meeting so that it's loaded in the barrel for
9 August. Because I think sooner is better, sooner is
10 better. So that you think about it sooner than later. I
11 would prefer you to think about it, our comments on the
12 EIS in August, time frame, then later right before
13 decision. Cause [sic] it gets too far down the road. So,
14 there's -- we've made some points for you to consider,
15 the data lacks [sic] that's needed, the ocean
16 competition and working across jurisdictional about
17 trying to get that under control with hatchery release.
18 We've laid out a whole bunch of issues that we feel are
19 instrumental in getting this to turn around and how
20 that's gonna [sic] work with the North Pacific Fisheries
21 Management Council to accomplish that. Cause 85% of the
22 fish swim through that area, that's an important thing,
23 that's a very important thing. And I feel that this --
24 you're on the right track. There's some -- you got all
25 the professionals and staff the bio mutations
26 actually figure it all out. But let's -- I think you're
27 on the right track. But there's a little more data that
28 needs to get plugged into this thing. So, I think there's
29 a little bit more work to do with some of the science
30 behind this, where the fish go in the North Pacific, how
31 many of those fish are actually of this bycatch? I would
32 estimate, I would think that most of that is -- has
33 reared in the North Pacific. That's why they're there,
34 that's why they're crossing that, so. They're not --
35 they don't just go over there just for kicks. They're
36 off course, if they are. If they're of Asians [sic]
37 origin, they're gonna [sic] come right straight across
38 to the -- they're gonna [sic] be north of that. So, I
39 think we've covered everything. I don't want to
40 (indiscernible) anything. I don't want to continue on
41 and make you -- I don't want to get upset or anything
42 anymore. You can -- you feel the pain of losing a fishery
43 on the Yukon River that we were -- relied on. When I
44 lived on the Yukon, we were eating fresh king salmon,
45 there's nothing better than a fresh king salmon on the
46 Yukon River. That was the longest run fish in Alaska,
47 they're super fat, even at Galena. They're that fat,
48 that thick on them. I mean, they just ask these people
49 the oil that pours off he's got to put buckets under
50 them because they have so much fat. That's what we're

1 not seeing, we're not seeing fat fish anymore. We got a
2 real problem, that means they're don't have enough food.
3 Doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure that one out
4 and this hatchery stuff has got to be the key to the
5 marine decline and combination with too much competition
6 on the ocean, that's what the problem is. So, I really
7 appreciate you coming to interact with our Council. And
8 so, we will be writing a letter to -- for your review.
9 Tomorrow we're gonna [sic] have public comments with
10 people, we're gonna [sic] have -- formulate other ideas.
11 And so, we're gonna [sic] -- I want to write a letter
12 that's going to be of assistance to your deliberation
13 in this chum bycatch issue. That's what I would like to
14 do with this Council. So, thank you very much. So,
15 any.....

16
17 MS. PILCHER: (Indiscernible) I
18 interrupted Rachel.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Did I interrupt
21 Rachel?

22
23 MS. PILCHER: No, I interrupted Rachel.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, you
26 interrupted, okay. So, okay. I think we're -- have any
27 final comments, Sarah?

28
29 MS. MARRINAN: Mr. Chair, I just wanted
30 to highlight the dates that we provided for when public
31 comment opportunities are open. That's our current
32 working timeline. There's a lot of dynamics that could
33 be changing and if those change will commit to
34 communicate those changes and timeline with your
35 coordinators so that you know when public comment
36 opportunities are available. And I also just wanted to
37 highlight to Tommy's point, it's your prerogative what
38 you'd like to include in a letter. So, if you want to
39 comment on the alternatives the Council can do that. You
40 can also highlight other points of information or
41 recommendations that you want the North Pacific
42 Management Council to understand. So, you can really
43 include whatever you'd like to in that letter, you don't
44 just have to focus on the alternatives. You can talk
45 about that tomorrow if you want. But all of that
46 information, anything you want to communicate to the
47 Council could be received in that letter. It's really
48 your choice what you'd like to include there.
49

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, well, that
2 was my intention. It has -- it's beyond the alternatives.
3 Is some of the data that's necessary to reiterate not
4 that I've basically been speaking onto the record here.
5 Go ahead, Don.

6
7 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sarah,
8 I really didn't know if you guys answered my question
9 or not. Okay, there's five alternatives here. This is
10 time sensitive and so, I mean, are we -- is this an
11 action item where we meet, I mean, are we choosing one
12 of the alternatives? I'm not getting this. Thank.....

13
14 MS. MARRINAN: Yes, I will try to clarify
15 and you can let me know if I -- if you're still confused
16 here. The alternatives that the Council is currently
17 considering, four of them are action alternatives, would
18 change Federal regulations. And also, I don't think I
19 mentioned this, but they're not mutually exclusive. Two
20 of them are but you can make recommendations for multiple
21 options that are being considered. So, you can look at
22 the alternatives that the Council is considering and
23 make any statements about them that you'd want, about
24 what you'd like to recommend. There's different, like
25 if you're thinking about an overall hard cap, there's
26 different values being considered. You can make
27 recommendations on those if you want to, or you can just
28 say, you know, we're interested in overall hard cap. You
29 can say we're interested in a corridor cap, anything
30 you'd like to speak to, or you feel like you want to say
31 in a letter, you can. In terms of timing of this we are
32 in this long Federal process that is still in the Council
33 arena, and they haven't made their final recommendations
34 to National Marine Fisheries Service yet. So, I mean,
35 in terms of urgency, it's a slow process. And like we
36 said, probably the next public comment opportunity is
37 August. So, you do have time but I think, as the Chair
38 mentioned, it might be helpful to think about these
39 things while they're fresh in your mind. So, if you have
40 comments coming out of this meeting, it might be helpful
41 since you might have momentum now to put those on paper.
42 You could also consider when the next version of the
43 analysis comes out. We haven't analyzed that new
44 corridor option yet, and when we do, I imagine we'll
45 look at things like how much pollock comes out of those
46 stat areas, how much chum salmon comes out of those stat
47 areas. So, you could think about it at that time as
48 well. So yeah, in terms of urgency, I mean, we definitely
49 hear concerns -- in river concerns about the urgency and
50 the seriousness of this issue. It is still just the way

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1 this regulatory process works. Is it -- it's a slow
2 process and we pass it over to National Marine Fisheries
3 Service, and then they go through rulemaking. So, there
4 are still multiple stages left. But we're at a point
5 where public comment opportunity will be coming up soon.
6 Does that clarify? Okay.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That was good.
9 Thank you, Sarah. And Robert.

10

11 MR. WALKER: Sarah. Robert Walker. I
12 would have to talk to the rest of our tribes in our
13 area. The poor villages will -- I'll present it to them,
14 and I'll tell them which option they would like to work
15 with. I know sometimes they can be very frustrated, too,
16 but I think this is part of -- this is not a deal, but
17 it's something to do. And, Mr. Chairman I would like to
18 introduce Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association
19 Serena Fitka and the Chairman of the Board, Bill Fitka.
20 So, I'm just glad you guys could make it to our meeting
21 here. And so, you could see firsthand how much that what
22 goes on here? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

23

24 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're gonna [sic]
25 have public comments on this tomorrow. So, that's why I
26 want -- I will -- you will have plenty of opportunity
27 to speak to our Council tomorrow. But this was a Council,
28 Regional Council interaction with the North Pacific
29 Fisheries Management Council. And we're -- I didn't want
30 to get public comment going and - cause [sic] we have -
31 - we're gonna [sic] be out of time here in about five
32 minutes anyways. So, tomorrow I would really like to get
33 the public comments before this Council. And so, the --
34 when would that be, Nissa that's around, that's in the
35 morning right away?

36

37 MS. PILCHER: For the record, this is
38 Nissa. It would be right away. So, my thought process
39 was, is this is still an agenda item. So, what we could
40 do is not close this agenda item out and then start
41 first thing in the morning on this. Take testimony on
42 this subject and then after that move to testimony on
43 non-agenda topics.

44

45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

46

47 MS. PILCHER: That was my thought.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That's what we're
50 gonna [sic] do tomorrow. So, we're not closing you off.

1 We're just gonna [sic] do -- we're -- it's on hold right
2 now. Tim Gervais, did you -- I heard you speaking. Did
3 you want a final comment, Tim?

4
5 MR. GERVAIS: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
6 This is Tim Gervais. Yeah, I would recommend to the
7 Council that they get the genetic analysis technology
8 up to speed with the -- with what BBSRI is doing and
9 incorporate that 24-hour genetic information into some
10 kinda AI or machine learning algorithm and help further
11 define what the spatial distribution of the different
12 stocks is. And then the second comment I had in closing
13 was I feel that the fleet, BSAI fleet should try to even
14 avoid this foreign bycatch because, these countries are
15 putting out, and Southeast Alaska's putting out a lot
16 of chum stamp, chum salmon hatchery stock. And if a
17 portion of it or a significant portion of it is getting
18 caught and wasted in a trawl fishery, that just means
19 they have to put out more smolts to meet their hatchery
20 goals. So, it has a detrimental effect where there's
21 salmon that's out there eating groceries in the ocean
22 with all the other wild salmon, and they're not being
23 utilized in any kind of meaningful harvesting. And so,
24 all the food that the Asian salmon are eating is getting
25 wasted or just destroyed in a - caught in on a trawl
26 net. So, I want, just suggesting that just because it's
27 foreign fish, or Washington in fish or Oregon fish, that,
28 that doesn't mean that the trawl, BSAI trawl fleet needs
29 to ignore that that's an impact. Thank you for coming
30 up. Appreciate your engagement with us on this important
31 topic. Have a nice trip.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, thank you, Tim.
34 Bringing up that bycatch, you know, there's SeaShare of
35 retention to share these. You know, if you're gonna [sic]
36 do a maturation analysis and you're -- those should be
37 flash frozen and return to river of origin. Where did
38 SeaShare come from? From a Western Interior Regional
39 Council meeting where we had two North Pacific Fisheries
40 Management Councils there and we were already -- this
41 is in like 2005. We were already starting to suppress
42 stocks and we're talking about bycatch. I stated on the
43 record then, when I wasn't even the Chair then that
44 those should be -- the salmon that are caught and you
45 know, bycatch mature salmon should be returned to the
46 river of origin. And so, the first one of the North
47 Pacific Council members says, well, that will cost a lot
48 of money. I says [sic] that disincentivizes catching
49 bycatch. But we have chum salmon, we have chinook salmon
50 lax and Bristol Bay micro sockeye are not satiating

1 people's appetite for fish. Jenny likes fat fish. People
2 are used to -- I'm telling you, these, even these summer
3 chums or these fall chums, they're really fat and that
4 -- people are used to eating -- and people say all the
5 time, that's my comfort food. That's my co[sic] -- why
6 do they say that? Because salmon fat is really high in
7 vitamin D, and vitamin D directly affects your
8 serotonin. Of course, it's their comfort food. So, I
9 would encourage the North Pacific -- I was off topic,
10 but I would encourage the North Pacific Fisheries
11 Management Council to retain adult salmon and return
12 those to river of origin. It's doing no one in the
13 affected communities any good at all. And the AYK if
14 they go to Seattle to the food bank, that's not helping
15 us. It's not helping us out. I would seriously comment
16 that, that should be a consideration of the North Pacific
17 Fisheries Management Council, that retention of adult
18 salmon should be returned into the AYK's systems that
19 are, especially the Yukon. We've had virtually no
20 fishery. Kuskokwim has had some fishing but, the Yukon
21 has had no fishing, we have nothing. If people are giving
22 us jars of fish from the Copper River or something. I
23 mean, it's like, it's bleak. So, I think that's a
24 consideration for your SeaShare program. Thank you. So,
25 we're gonna [sic] close out this meeting now. One more
26 thing there, Nissa.

27
28 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa. This will
29 be really, really quick. One, there are some letters in
30 the green folder you guys were handed. It includes a
31 letter from -- they're all involving the alternatives
32 and what other people or other organizations think about
33 them. If you wanted to review them tonight or tomorrow
34 morning, I realize we're all probably pretty fried. One
35 is from Chief Brian Ridley that was given to us by TCC.
36 One is, which I will hand out is by the Eastern Interior
37 Regional Advisory Council at their last meeting. There's
38 one from the Fish and Wildlife Service and I do have two
39 that Krystal just shared with me, one from Healy Lake
40 village and one's more, looks more like that, like a
41 ch[sic] -- not a chain, but a stock letter where you
42 could adopt some things or not adopt others, that I will
43 get printed, hopefully tomorrow morning. I'll email them
44 out to those of us that have emails. But if you wanted
45 to take a look and see what other people have done or
46 said in relation to these alternatives you can -- maybe
47 that'll help you guys figure out kind of what you guys
48 (distortion) want to recommend. That is all, thank you.
49

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we're right at
2 8:32 p.m. We're two minutes short. Oh, go ahead, Steve.
3 I don't wanna cut anybody off.

4
5 MR. WILLIAMS: No, no. That's all right.
6 Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to say thank you for
7 having us. I think that you know, number on the table
8 identified this is a complex issue. It's obvious to me,
9 at least from my perspective, that you yourself have a
10 pretty good picture of kinda how these things fit
11 together. I think building off of that, you can use that
12 to help us get an idea of, you know, the thoughts that
13 this Council may have. But I do appreciate you having
14 us. It's been very good to listen to these comments and
15 hear kinda how they all fit together. So, thank you very
16 much, I appreciate it.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Steve.
19 Thanks, John, for hopefully, you know, all your work to
20 get the Council to come to the Regional Council meetings.
21 So, I appreciate that and I do appreciate, you know,
22 Rachel and Anne coming here just listening -- I can tell
23 you're intensely listening and I understand your
24 consternation with the complexity of this issue. But
25 there is an overriding objective here of, I think we can
26 harvest these or protect these salmon, and we can still
27 harvest the pollock. I still think -- I'm pretty sure
28 you can still do it. You know, the biomass is going to
29 be there. It'll show up in the A season. There's a way
30 to catch that fish. So, I'm concerned, you know we have
31 all these concerns. So, we need to close this meeting
32 out and -- oh, John.

33
34 MR. MOLLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
35 just want to make a closing remark here that, you know,
36 I don't think any one of us think that this is a one and
37 done opportunity. And that, you know, part of the purpose
38 for being here is, one, you know, help the Council to
39 meet and greet folks from the region here relative to
40 affected stakeholders here. I think it's imperative upon
41 us to create that opportunity for relationships to build
42 in the narrative and the discussion to continue. And as
43 Jenny mentioned, you -- we're not gonna [sic] get through
44 this together alone, it's gonna [sic] -- we're gonna
45 [sic] to have to do it together. But I just wanna offer
46 that up. I think most -- everybody has my cell phone.
47 And feel free if you got questions and I'll be -- do my
48 darndest to try to answer them or if I can't, I have the
49 numbers of the staff. So, thank you.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you very
2 much. Final comments, Rachel or Anne?

3
4 MS. BAKER: Mr. Chair, this is Rachel. I
5 would just echo my appreciation for having us here this
6 evening. And thanks again and I -- the one thing I did
7 want to stress is speaking to the frustration around
8 your members here with the process and how long it takes.
9 One thing that was really clear at the North Pacific
10 Council February meeting is, when this comes back to the
11 North Pacific Council the next time this action -- there
12 is full intention to take a final action to recommend
13 to the National Marine Fisheries Service as Sarah
14 highlighted for us. And that I just wanted to point that
15 out, I'm not sure that we talked about that tonight.

16
17 MS. MARRINAN: And I also would like to
18 thank you all for having us. It's -- I think every time
19 we're able to meet with people outside of our normal
20 circle of the fisheries that we deal in, it helps us get
21 a better, broader understanding and in this forum, I
22 think we've all learned a lot from that as well. I think
23 one thing that you hit on a couple of times yourself,
24 Mr. Chair, was additional information that you think
25 would be helpful for the analysis. And I know that the
26 Council and staff would be appreciative if you have
27 information or know where that information might be
28 available, that it could be included. That they would
29 be happy to look, to see if that could be incorporated
30 on the timeline that we're operating under. So, I would
31 encourage if you have that information to help share it.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, thank you.
34 So, I think it was a great discussion. It was gonna
35 [sic] be highlighted this meeting, the -- this winter
36 meeting for this regional Council. And so, I'm
37 appreciative of the work that you're doing and that your
38 intention is for final action for protection of chum
39 salmon on the Bering Sea. I appreciate that. So, any --
40 at this time, we're going to go into recess till [sic]
41 tomorrow morning at 9 a.m. And so, that's when we're
42 gonna [sic] go pick this issue back up again and we're
43 gonna [sic] get public comments on that one, at that
44 time. So, this will be adjournment for this evening.
45 Thank you.

46
47 (Off record)

48
49 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Rafael Morel, for Lighthouse Integrated Services Corp, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 171 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the WESTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I recorded on the 25th day of February;

THAT the transcript is a true and correct transcript requested to be transcribed and thereafter transcribed by under my direction and reduced to print to the best of our knowledge and ability;

THAT I am not an employee, attorney, or party interested in any way in this action.

DATED at Isabela, Puerto Rico this 13th day of March 2025.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager