

Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
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WIRAC14036.MH

72 DEC 2014

Mr. Dan Hull, Chair
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
P.O. Box 100498
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2252

Dear Chairman Hull:

The Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) represents subsistence harvesters of fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands and waters of the Western Interior Region of Alaska. The Council was established by the authority in Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Section 805 of ANILCA and the Council's charter recognize the Council's authority to initiate, review and evaluate proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters related to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands within the region, and provides a forum for the expression of opinions and recommendations regarding any matter related to the subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands within the region.

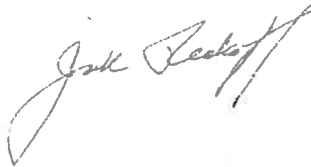
The Council held a public meeting in McGrath on October 28-29, 2014, regarding subsistence issues. The Council heard recommendations from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDLFA) and reviewed the specific comment submitted for your consideration regarding Agenda Item C2 to be discussed at the meeting of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) in Anchorage during the week of December 8, 2014. This Council strongly endorses the recommendations outlined in the comments submitted by the Association of Village Council Presidents, Kawerak, Inc., Tanana Chiefs Conference, Bering Sea Fishermen's Association, and the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association on May 27, 2014 to reduce bycatch and bycatch mortality.

The Council is very concerned with the issue of Chinook and chum salmon bycatch on the Bering Sea and its adverse effects on subsistence users who continue to endure hardship as a result of the recent Chinook salmon stock declines. Chinook salmon stocks throughout western Alaska have experienced very low returns over the last six years. The Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers, the two largest Chinook salmon subsistence fisheries in Alaska, have experienced the lowest returns of Chinook salmon on record during this period.

We applaud the ongoing efforts to limit bycatch in the Bering Sea Pollock fishery, but urge the NPFMC to take immediate action to implement further reductions in allowable Chinook and chum salmon bycatch to ensure conservation of these stocks in a manner that maximizes the number of both adult Chinook and chum salmon returning to freshwater habitats.

Thank you for the opportunity to dialogue with the NPFMC. We look forward to continuing discussions about the issues and concerns of subsistence users of the Western Interior Region. If you have questions about this report, please contact me via Melinda Burke, Subsistence Council Coordinator, with the Office of Subsistence Management at 1-800-478-1456 or (907) 786-3885.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack Reakoff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jack Reakoff
Chair

cc: Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Eugene R. Peltola, Jr., Assistant Regional Director, OSM
Chuck Ardizzone, Deputy Assistant Regional Director, OSM
Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief, OSM
Donald Rivard, Fisheries Biologist, OSM
George Pappas, State Liaison, OSM
Interagency Staff Committee
Wayne Jenkins, YRDFA
Administrative Record
