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March 18, 2015

North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 West 4th Ave, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501

RE: C-2 Bering Sea Salmon Bycatch

Dear Council Members:

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the salmon bycatch issue. As you may know, salmon are the cornerstone for our nutritional, cultural and economic survival.

In 2014, for the first time our history, subsistence fisheries for Chinook salmon was completely closed on the Yukon River and severely limited on the Kuskokwim River. Even more abhorrent, the very minimum amount necessary for subsistence have not been met on the Yukon River since 2008 and on the Kuskokwim since 2011-2012. These dramatically low salmon runs and harvests have caused severe negative impacts to my family, our community and surrounding communities.

In light of the severe negative impacts, the measures adopted in April 2009 by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (the Council) providing for a 47,591 bycatch level, with the potential for the fleet to reach 60,000 in two out of every seven years without consequence is abominable and unacceptable.

At a time when we have little to no subsistence harvest on the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers, even one fish caught as bycatch should not be tolerated.

I am asking the Council to take final action in April to reduce the overall cap and performance cap for Chinook salmon bycatch by the maximum under consideration (60%) in times of low salmon abundance (Alternative 5, option 2, with the suboption to apply the 60% reduction to the overall hard cap). Alternative 2 and Alternative 3, options 1-5, should be selected as well.

Please make the hard choice to restore salmon stocks and develop a sustainable fishery.

Sincerely,

Signed: Zachary Nicholi

Address: P.O. Box 73
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