

Francis Nicholai  
Napaskiak  
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## RE: C2 Chum Salmon Bycatch - Initial Review

Dear North Pacific Fishery Management Council, Waqaa, my name is Francis Nicholai. I was born and raised in Napaskiak, Alaska. I am writing to you as a concerned member of the community and a supporter of the Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF) and the Community Development Quota (CDQ) Program. I believe it is important to highlight the profound and lasting impact that the CDQ program has on the communities it serves, particularly in Western Alaska, where it provides vital economic opportunities, community development, and a sense of local autonomy. CVRF has played an integral role in my educational journey, from high school to my undergraduate studies, and then to my current pursuit of a graduate degree. Through the scholarships and internships, I received from CVRF, I was able to alleviate financial pressures and focus on my studies, making my higher education more accessible. The hands-on experience and mentorship I gained through the internships not only enhanced my academic knowledge but also helped me build valuable skills and connections that have shaped my career path. Now, as I continue in my graduate program, I am more equipped than ever to succeed, and I owe much of this progress to the ongoing support and opportunities provided by CVRF. Their commitment to investing in local talent has truly made a difference in my life, empowering me to pursue my goals and contribute back to my community. As a resident of Napaskiak or someone who has witnessed the benefits of CVRF firsthand, I can attest to how critical the CDQ program is to the livelihood of our communities. CVRF has enabled residents to participate in the fisheries industry, providing jobs and training that sustain families and contribute to local economies. Without these opportunities, many communities, including ours, would face immense challenges, as we rely on these programs to support education, housing, infrastructure, and other essential community services. The CDQ program is not only a financial lifeline, but also an essential source of pride and local involvement. I strongly urge you to consider the far-reaching consequences of cutting or weakening the CDQ program. Removing or diminishing its scope would undermine the progress our communities have made and hinder future opportunities for growth. Our ability to directly manage and benefit from local resources is a cornerstone of both our economic stability and cultural preservation. I respectfully ask that the Council carefully consider the voices of the communities directly impacted by the CDQ program and work to protect this vital resource. The future of our families, communities, and way of life depends on it. Thank you for your time and consideration. Quyana, Francis Nicholai