

Mr. Witherell & Council,

My name is Florence Kargi & I am from Hooper Bay, the largest village on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta with more than 1,300 people. I am the Regional Affairs Manager for Coastal Villages Region Fund, which is 1 of 6 non-profit CDQ groups.

The Western Alaska Community Development Quota program gives Bering Sea villages a chance to invest in the fishing industry and use those earnings for economic development and related programs. Congress added CDQ to the Magnuson-Stevens Act in 1996. There are 65 villages with nearly 30,000 residents in the CDQ program. CVRF is the largest of the 6 groups. We serve more than 9000 residents in 20 villages, including my hometown of Hooper Bay.

Growing up in western Alaska was hard. We had no running water in our home. We hauled water for washing dishes & filling the Danby Washer. Our toilet was a honey bucket – a 5-gallon bucket w/ plastic bag and a toilet seat on top. When I turned 12, I got to empty the honey bucket along with my other chores. I thought this was normal. Even today, only 6 of CVRF's 20 villages have piped water & sewer systems. However, CVRF was recently able to help one of our villages: TNK– qualify for federal and state investment in a water system.

As a middle schooler, I looked up to the high schoolers in our village as role models. Unfortunately, the youth suicide rate in our region was many times higher than the national average. Again, I thought this was normal. Later, I realized I wanted something different for myself. CVRF gave me hope. I applied for and received a college scholarship in 2009 and began working there full time in 2013.

Today, CVRF employs hundreds of teenagers during the summer. We keep them active and engaged, learning job skills & maintaining Alaska Native cultural activities.

I am so grateful for the leaders from our region who fought to create CDQ; Harold Sparck, & others like Louis Bunyan & Joe Paniyak who didn't even speak English well. They showed up at government meetings and convinced stakeholders to support this important program. Thanks to them, CVRF OWNS & OPERATES its own vessels in the Bering Sea. We sell seafood around the globe, earning \$75-\$90 million in revenue and \$12-15 million for our benefits programs.

CVRF offers many different benefits. We help our residents acquire & maintain equipment like ATV's, snow machines, and small boats for commercial fishing and subsistence use. We run mechanic/welder shops in our villages, and we even provide warranty repairs on some Honda products. We also provide fuel oil to heat homes in late winter when people start to run out.

We partnered with BIA and USDA on a housing program that convinced banks to offer mortgages in our communities. And we buy salmon from other parts of Alaska for people who live in villages where the salmon runs are struggling. We believe CVRF is the largest private sector employer across our region. The 6 CDQ groups all have different benefits programs that fit their regions. But we all get our resources from the Bering Sea.

CDQ depends on a healthy fishing industry and sustainable fisheries management under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. There are 65 CDQ communities and nearly 30,000 people who benefit from the CDQ program. Every CDQ community has a tribe and almost every resident is a Tribal Member. We struggle with extreme poverty, lack of infrastructure, and climate change. CDQ is one of the few bright spots helping address these challenges.

Quyana Cakneq, Thank you.

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

Florence Kargi, Qak'aaq