

Alaska State Legislature



July 12, 2021

Honorable Governor Michael Dunleavy
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001
*Delivered electronically to all addressees

Governor Dunleavy,

We are writing to share our urgent food security concerns for Alaskans living along the Yukon and Koyukuk Rivers. The Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game (ADF&G) closed the salmon subsistence fisheries in these river communities in June and low counts have prevented any reversal of this decision to date.

As you know, the 2020 salmon season was a disaster in many areas across the state. This coupled with COVID-19 quarantines and few employment opportunities have left many families in this region struggling to meet basic needs. We appreciated your recent letter to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce requesting disaster determinations for last year's salmon season. If approved, this funding will be beneficial to many families, but it will not arrive soon enough to meet their food security needs this year.

Due to the subsistence closures in June, our offices have been receiving daily calls from constituents concerned for the wellbeing of their families and communities. With little work available in their villages, it is difficult for families to offset the loss of salmon with high-priced food that is flown in. The Alaska Native Tribes along the Yukon and Koyukuk Rivers have been harvesting salmon and preserving this valuable resource for thousands of years, passing on this tradition to each generation. At risk is not only food security but also their culture and way of life.

We urge you to work towards immediate and long-term solutions with local, statewide, and federal agencies to help address the food security and cultural traditions along the Yukon and Koyukuk Rivers. Here are some solutions put forth by the constituents and communities we represent.

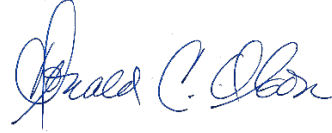
1. ADF&G meet with the Yukon and Koyukuk River tribal associations and communities to discuss options for immediate solutions and relief such as allowing subsistence users to harvest a limited number of salmon per family.
2. Provide relief to families affected by the Yukon and Koyukuk River subsistence closures through ADF&G grants from the \$6 million American Rescue Plan Act food security funding in this year's budget.
3. Address long-term concerns related to salmon by-catch in federal waters.
4. Address long-term issues related to warming temperatures causing fish die-offs in the Yukon River.
5. Address long-term issues related to environmental cleanup of contaminated properties along the Yukon River.

Thank you for your attention to this critical food security issue affecting families and communities along the Yukon and Koyukuk Rivers. Attached please find several council resolutions outlining the hardships experienced by their communities and requesting immediate assistance.

Sincerely,



Rep. Neal Foster
House District 39



Sen. Donny Olson
Senate District T



Rep. Tiffany Zulkosky
House District 38



Sen. Lyman Hoffman
Senate District S

cc:

ADF&G Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang
Miles Baker, Legislative Director, Office of the Governor
Rex Rock, Tribal Affairs Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor
U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan
U.S. Congressman Don Young
Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association
Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association
Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

Attachments



CHULOONAWICK NATIVE VILLAGE
chuloonawick@gci.net

July 6, 2021

The Villages on the Lower Yukon District 1 and 2 have been dependent on king salmon, summer / fall chums, and silver salmon, which aren't returning in healthy numbers prompting closures. Our smokehouses are empty, no salmon in our freezers, none to can, or salt for the coming winter.

Subsistence salmon fishing was closed on June 2, 2021 by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game on the Yukon River District 1 and 2. Traditional salmon harvest is the lifeblood of the Yup'ik people on the Lower Yukon and has a sustained life and provided for our people for over ten thousand years.

The Yup'ik people of the Lower Yukon District 1 and 2 have worked hard to preserve our salmon resources for thousands of years, long before Alaska became a state and long before management was passed on to government agencies. Traditional salmon harvest provides food security for the Yup'ik people of the Lower Yukon that otherwise have to pay the high costs of other food staples.

We need your help, more so during this international pandemic. Our food security has been affected, our people are reliant on traditional salmon harvest for our most precious resource, which has been sustained us for thousands of years.

Sincerely,

Roberta Murphy, President



RESOLUTION # 21-04

A RESOLUTION OF THE CHULOOKAWICK NATIVE VILLAGE DEMANDING THE ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME AND YUKON RIVER FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT TO OPEN SUBSISTENCE SALMON FISHING TO PROVIDE FOR TRADITIONAL SALMON HARVEST IN LOWER YUKON RIVER DISTRICT Y1.

WHEREAS, Subsistence salmon fishing was closed on June 02, 2021 in Lower Yukon District Y1; and

WHEREAS, Traditional salmon harvest is the lifeblood of the Yup'ik people on the Lower Yukon and has sustained life and provided for our people for over ten thousand years; and

WHEREAS, Yukon salmon are the most precious and valued resource of the Yup'ik people and harvesting only what is needed is our most deeply held tradition; and

WHEREAS, the Yup'ik people of the Lower Yukon have worked hard to preserve our salmon resource for thousands of years, long before Alaska became a state and long before management was passed on to government agencies; and

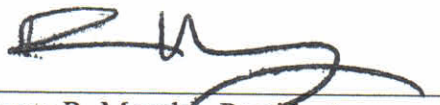
WHEREAS, Traditional salmon harvest provides food security for the Yup'ik people of the Lower Yukon that otherwise have to pay the high costs of other food staples.

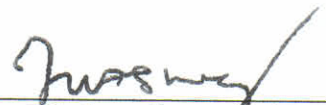
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE: Chuloonawick Native Village that we request the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Yukon Federal Fisheries Management to open subsistence salmon harvest opportunities for the Yup'ik people of the Lower Yukon to provide for the harvest of our most precious resource, which has sustained us for thousands of years.

5 In favor 0 In opposition 0 Abstain

ADOPTED by a duly constituted quorum of the **Chuloonawick Native Village** on this 15th day of June, 2021.

ATTEST:


Roberta R. Murphy, President


Thomas Waskey, Secretary/Treasurer



RESOLUTION # 21-03

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CHULOONAWICK NATIVE VILLAGE CONCERNING THE
SUBSISTENCE SALMON SHUTDOWN ON THE LOWER YUKON DELTA.**

WHEREAS: the Chuloonawick Native Village, has a responsibility to all its tribal members in matters which may violate tribal rights to a subsistence lifestyle, and ancient traditional subsistence practices, and tribal sovereignty; and

Whereas: the Alaska Department of Fish & Game closure of subsistence salmon fishing, has already had a huge negative impact on ALL subsistence users on the lower Yukon delta, who depend heavily upon the salmon run to provide food for families all year round; and

Whereas: the Chuloonawick Native Village with this resolution urges the Alaska Department of Fish & Game to allow subsistence users on the lower Yukon to get ONLY what they need to feed their families; and

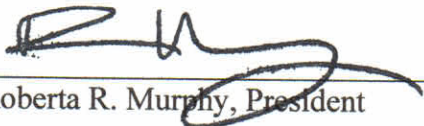
Whereas: the Kusilvak census area is the poorest economic region in the United States, and the people depend heavily upon subsistence, to provide for their families; and

Whereas, Closure of subsistence fishing will only make outlaws of people only trying to survive off the land that has provided for our people for centuries.

NOW THEREFOR LET IT BE RESOLVED: that the Chuloonawick Native Village Tribal Council will support and defend any tribal member who relies on a subsistence lifestyle.

5 In favor ~~0~~ In opposition ~~0~~ Abstain

ADOPTED by a duly constituted quorum of the **Chuloonawick Native Village**, on this 15th day of June, 2021.



Roberta R. Murphy, President

ATTEST:



Thomas Waskey, Secretary/Treasurer



P.O. Box 126
Emmonak, AK 99581
Phone: (907) 949-1720
Fax: (907) 949-1384
Email: emktribal@gmail.com

RESOLUTION 21-11

A RESOLUTION OF THE NATIVE VILLAGE OF EMMONAK DEMANDING THE ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME AND YUKON RIVER FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT TO OPEN SUBSISTENCE SALMON FISHING FOR THE NATIVE PEOPLE IN THE LOWER YUKON DISTRICT TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR TRADITIONAL SALMON HARVEST.

WHEREAS, subsistence salmon fishing was closed on June __2nd__, 2021 in Lower Yukon District; and

WHEREAS, traditional salmon harvest is the lifeblood for the Yup'ik people on the Lower Yukon which sustains our survival of life and provides for our people for over ten thousand years; and

WHEREAS, Yukon salmon are the most precious and valued resource of the Yup'ik people and harvesting only what is needed is our most deeply held tradition; and

WHEREAS, The Yup'ik people of the Lower Yukon have worked hard to preserve our salmon resource for thousands of years, long before Alaska became a State and long before management was passed onto government agencies; and


WHEREAS, harvesting traditional salmon provides food security for the Yup'ik people of the Lower Yukon that otherwise have to pay the high costs of other food staples.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE NATIVE VILLAGE OF EMMONAK demands that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Yukon Federal Fisheries Management open subsistence salmon harvest opportunities for the Yup'ik people of the Lower Yukon to provide for their harvest of our most precious resource, which has sustained us for all of our ethnicities' existence.

__5__ In favor __0__ In opposition __0__ Abstain

ADOPTED by a duly constituted quorum of the **NATIVE VILLAGE OF EMMONAK** on this 6th day of July, 2021

ATTEST:


Charles Augustine, President


Terese Teganlakla, Secretary/Treasurer