



The Honorable Dan Sullivan  
United States Senator  
302 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

June 26, 2023

*Transmitted via email.*

Dear Senator Sullivan,

Thank you for your leadership in introducing and passing the Alaska Salmon Research Task Force Act. The Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers are facing a salmon crisis that imperils both the food security and traditional expression of Alaska Native Tribes and subsistence communities. Your work in the U.S. Senate has helped marshal needed attention and resources to help Tribes, communities, scientists, and government agencies cooperatively address this crisis.

While we look forward to seeing the Task Force begin its work to consider and develop research strategies that will help understand and respond to the loss of salmon populations on these rivers and in other Alaska watersheds, we were disappointed that the appointees to the Task Force do not include any Tribal members from the Yukon River region. Based on the list of appointees announced this week, it appears that none of the 56 federally-recognized Tribes along the Yukon River will be represented among the Task Force's members. Salmon harvesters along the Yukon River are facing the fourth year of subsistence fishery closures due to steep declines in the number of chum and Chinook salmon returning to the river. The situation playing out on the Yukon River is one of the most urgent examples of declining Pacific salmon populations in Alaska. We feel it is important for those most directly affected by the loss of this resource to be at the table as strategies are developed to better understand these catastrophic salmon declines.

For this reason, we urge you to intervene to ensure that Yukon River Tribes are represented on the Alaska Salmon Research Task Force. Doing so will significantly strengthen the Task Force's work and ensure that affected Tribes on both rivers have a voice in identifying key research needs to begin to recover vulnerable salmon populations.

Thank you for considering our request, and please contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "BR".

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Brian Ridley  
Chief/Chairman  
Tanana Chiefs Conference

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vivian Korthuis".

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Vivian Korthuis  
Chief Executive Officer  
Association of Village Council Presidents