

August 5, 2021

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: TCC Support for the Sustaining America's Fisheries for the Future Act

Chairman Huffman,

I would like to thank you for the leadership and vision that you have shown in the drafting and introduction of the *Sustaining America's Fisheries for the Future Act* (the "SAFFA"). The Tanana Chiefs Conference appreciates that you listened to our voices and priorities throughout your long and thoughtful process leading to the introduction of this bill.

The Tanana Chiefs Conference ("TCC") is a non-profit intertribal consortium of 37 federally recognized tribes and 41 communities located across Alaska's vast interior. Our communities are situated on rivers such as the Yukon, Kuskokwim, and Koyukuk. These rivers support the salmon runs that our people have relied on for years.

Unfortunately, the salmon runs have been collapsing, which imperils our physical, spiritual, and cultural sustenance. The SAFFA will address this critical situation by addressing the three priorities TCC has long advocated for in any Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization: (1) it provides Indigenous voices with a seat at the table; (2) it recognizes the importance of subsistence fishers; and (3) it seeks to address the impacts that global warming is having on our fisheries.

Alaskan tribes have never had a meaningful path to a seat on the North Pacific Council because seat selections were allocated to commercial and recreational interests. The SAFFA will add two tribal seats to the North Pacific Council, which will ensure that our voices are heard. Alaska Natives have relied on and lived in harmony with Alaskan fisheries since time immemorial. We have wisdom and knowledge that can help restore our fisheries for the benefit of all. These council seats will ensure that we are at the table to share our insights.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act helped to turn many fisheries around from the brink of collapse to sustainability. However, when it was written it had two groups in mind – commercial and recreational fishers. It totally ignored subsistence fishers, who arguably have more to lose when a fishery collapses. The SAFFA recognizes the importance of subsistence fishers and places their knowledge, stake, and impact on par with both commercial and recreational fishers. The majority of TCC's fishers practice subsistence fishing and for the first time this bill will provide meaningful recognition of our skill sets and the immense reliance that we have on maintaining sustainable fisheries.

Finally, global warming is becoming one of the greatest threats to our fisheries and Alaska is on the front lines of that fight. What happens in the oceans is magnified on the inland spawning routes of salmon as ocean acidification, rising water temperatures, and ecological changes conspire to imperil our salmon. The SAFFA's comprehensive approach to increasing data collection, shifting to ecological-based management systems, and giving managers new regulatory tools will help ensure that our fisheries survive.

The SAFFA represents the bold steps that we all need to take to ensure a sustainable fishery for us today and for the future generations. TCC appreciates and supports this valuable piece of legislation and urges you to move the bill quickly through the committee process.

Sincerely,



PJ Simon, Jr.

Chief/Chair