

**Prepared Statement of Ben Nighthorse Campbell
Vice Chairman - Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
Hearing on Subsistence in the State of Alaska**

April 17, 2002

Good afternoon. Today's hearing deals with the issue of Subsistence Fishing and Hunting in the State of Alaska.

Since time immemorial, Alaska Natives have lived off the land and have fished and hunted from the abundant lands of Alaska.

At the same time commercial fishermen in Alaska — and particularly in western Alaska — are facing economic collapse as a result of many factors, not least of which is keen competition from imported salmon products from Chile and Norway.

“Subsistence in Alaska” conjures up many conflicts:

Between	Urban and rural Alaskans
Between	Natives and Non-Natives in Alaska
Between	Commercial Activities and Subsistence Activities
Between	Court challenges and Legislative Responses, and
Between	State Law and Federal Law

Whether they support the various laws or not, the parties to this dispute must acknowledge the laws and work with them.

In the largest Native Land Settlement Bill in history, the *Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971* (ANCSA) extinguished Native land claims as well as aboriginal claims to hunting and fishing.

Nine years later the *Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980* (ANILCA) was enacted: Title 8 of this law requires a subsistence hunting and fishing preference for rural residents.

Objections to these laws by the Parties over the years, combined with Court challenges, have led us to today's hearing.

It is my hope, Mr. Chairman, that the hearing today will lay the foundation for future discussions between

1. the Alaskans: Natives, Fishermen, Rural and Urban Residents, and of course our

colleagues Senators Murkowski and Stevens;

2. the Congress; and

3. the Administration

in reaching a resolution that all parties can not only live with, but can prosper with.

I thank you Mr. Chairman and look forward to hearing from our witnesses today.