

United States Senate
Select Committee on Indian Affairs

April 17, 2002

Oversight Hearing on
**Subsistence Hunting and Fishing Issues
in the State of Alaska**

2:00 p.m. at Senate Russell Room 485

Testimonial Presented from Witness:

Arthur Lake, President
Association of Village Council Presidents
P.O. Box 219
Bethel, Alaska 99559

Subsistence Hunting and Fishing Issues in the State of Alaska
By the Association of Village Council Presidents

The Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) is one of the 12 regional Native non-profit organizations in Alaska. The Village Councils established AVCP in 1964 to work for the benefit of the tribal governments and the people of the Yukon River and Kuskokwim River (YK) Delta¹.

AVCP was involved in the process leading to the federal legislation called the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Since 1964, AVCP has grown to become a diverse social service agency, tribal rights advocate, and community development organization.

Our services are varied and not limited to operation under the departments of: Administration, Accounting, Education, Employment, Training & Childcare, Natural Resources, Realty, Social Services, Tribal Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Headstart, Planning, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program (TANF,) Village Public Safety Officer Program and the Yup'ik Cultural Center/Museum.

The 56 communities listed on our letterhead are all federally-recognized tribes that make up our organization. Each tribe has a Village Council and representatives of each tribal government make up the AVCP Board of Directors. The Board holds a twice-annual Convention at rotating in-region sites in which to discuss traditional and contemporary issues that affect our culture and communities, with Subsistence undoubtedly the most important issue².

AVCP offices are located in Bethel, Alaska. Bethel is the regional "hub" community, with a population of approximately 6,000. Bethel is home to most federal and state agency offices. The Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge headquarters are also located in Bethel, managing a land mass equivalent to the State of Washington.

The YK hosts what is commonly referred to as the Central Bering Sea Eskimo, but the Yup'ik / Cup'ik³ "the Real People" is the most accurate cultural reference. The very remoteness of the YK Delta as well as the lack of easily extractable and exploitable resources perhaps protected the Yup'ik / Cup'ik culture the most from the Territorial days up to and beyond Statehood. The AVCP region is the least impacted by Western lifestyle in regard to language, art, culture and economy. As a result, our people, our villages, have retained the most basic stronghold of our culture, Subsistence. The Yup'ik / Cup'ik are the most avidly practicing customary and traditional Subsistence users in the State. When 'outsiders' need to learn or experience a taste of what Subsistence is, they are directed to us because we live Subsistence⁴. Subsistence is our way of life, not a lifestyle. Subsistence defines the Yup'ik / Cup'ik, not the other way around.

¹ Reference Map - "Attachment I."

² Reference 2001 Annual Report - "Attachment II."

³ The Cup'ik "C" is pronounced "Ch" (Choo-pik.)

⁴ Reference New York Times Article from July 12, 1999 - "Attachment III."

In recognizing Subsistence as the anchor to our cultural survival and cultural integrity, AVCP's Department of Natural Resources main purpose is to protect Subsistence relevance in State and Federal resource management.

For nearly forty years we have endeavored to apply traditional knowledge and customary and traditional use patterns and practices to Western management regimes. Co-management programs have proved to be the most effective means of bonding the two paradigms. AVCP has experienced some success in resource management programs with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), and on shared resource issues, other Native regional groups.

Examples of our past co-management programs with the Yukon (Kuskokwim) Delta National Wildlife Refuge (and in some instances the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge) include the Western Alaska Brown Bear Management Area (WABBMA), the Quailnguut (Kilbuck) Caribou Herd Management Plan (QCH), the Lower Yukon Moose Management Plan and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Goose Management Plan⁵ (which has gone on to inspire implementation of the Amendments of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in recognizing Alaska Native Spring hunts and egging activities.)

Though AVCP's Imapigmuut Ungungsiit Murilkestiit (IUM) (Watchers of the Sea Mammals) group does not have a co-management plan nor receives funding from Statewide species management programs, we are invited to participate in meetings with the Indigenous Peoples Commission on Marine Mammals (IPCoMM), the Alaska Beluga Whale Committee (ABWC) and the Eskimo Walrus Commission (EWC.)

While the State and the Federal government draw their lines in the sand, the Alaska Natives watch in bewilderment, the politicizing of a way of living. To the Yup'ik, Subsistence is the pursuit for our very sustenance, it is our daily bread, our sacrament, our activity planner, our exercise, our art, our measure of time in the changing of seasons. Subsistence is our creator and our humility.

Ironically, while Federal laws attempted to protect resource and land use for Alaska's Indigenous Peoples, Federal Law extinguished "Aboriginal Rights." We have since suffered attacks on our Subsistence rights by the Alaska Legislature. The federal mandate under the Alaska National Interests Land Conservation Act (ANILCA) for a rural priority is seen simply as a 'threat' to the non-Native residents' notion of equal protection. When priority was going to be given to Alaska Native hunting and fishing, the State government told Congress that it could not participate in implementing such a priority; this is why ANILCA's "rural" priority came about.

⁵ AVCP Convention Resolution 02-03-07 Reauthorizing the YK Goose Management Plan "Attachment IV."

The first mistake in the history of Subsistence management for Alaska was that Alaska Natives were not treated as a unique interest group, possessing hunting and fishing rights not as “rural” residents, but as Native American.

State funding for Subsistence management has been categorically reduced in recent years; it has led the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, especially the Division of Subsistence to cut critical management programs. This year, the Legislature even went as far as to consider cutting the entire funding for the Division of Subsistence in defiance of Federal law. These cuts to State Subsistence management funding make Federal Subsistence management all the more important.

At its Special Convention last month, the AVCP full Board voted to oppose Governor Knowles’ Subsistence Amendment to the Alaska Constitution. Were the State to regain control in management at this time, given a possible change in Administration and the make-up of a hostile Alaska Legislature, the integrity of Subsistence management for the benefit of our people would undoubtedly be compromised. We cannot sacrifice the security of our way of life on the false altar of “regaining State management.”

Our Subsistence way of life is vital to our self-determination, health and well being, and the physical and cultural survival of our people.

Our Subsistence way of life is under severe attack from the Alaska Legislature, which is exemplified by the attempts to do away with the Division of Subsistence of the Alaska Department of Fish & Game in its entirety. This action demonstrates the House leadership's true agenda of regaining state control over Subsistence not to manage it, but to destroy it.

While we are not against State reconciliation, we feel that pushing an agenda of State management at this time would not be conducive to appropriate Subsistence regulatory management. Governor Tony Knowles of Alaska should be commended for his efforts, in the face of legislative resistance, to take the high road in abandoning the State's appeal of the *Katie John* case, and to try to find a solution to the Subsistence conflict that would have brought Alaskans together. Unfortunately; however, not everyone in positions of power in Alaska shares his respect for our way of life. Continued Federal management is a necessary shield against State abuses that might undermine or compromise the security of our way of life.

It would be a tragedy if our people were to assist the State in regaining management over Subsistence, only to pave the way for a potentially hostile administration in Juneau that might manage our Subsistence in a disrespectful and destructive manner.

Even under the current administration in Juneau, state managers have not always granted Subsistence a meaningful priority over competing uses during times of shortage, to the same degree that federal managers have; for example, with Subsistence restrictions in place on in the Yukon and Kuskokwim drainages last summer, the Federal Subsistence Board closed sport fishing on federal waters, but the state managers left sport fishing open on those waters that remained under their sole and exclusive jurisdiction.

Federal management appears to be working well, for the most part, and is more likely to provide meaningful protection for our Subsistence way of life, at least for the time being and for some time into the future.

AVCP is committed to hold and maintain our position that we not amend the Alaska Constitution at this time. AVCP cannot support a return to state management at this time, for the fundamental importance of preserving and protecting our tribal Subsistence way of life must always come first.

Finally, AVCP opposes any compromising amendments to ANILCA, that might be considered as an effort to somehow “sweeten” the deal for the State of Alaska, and thereby induce the Alaska Legislature to put forth a Subsistence amendment to the State Constitution. ANILCA’s “rural” priority – flawed as it may be – has at least provided our people with federal protection for our way of life. Unless a Native priority is to be recognized, we cannot support further amendments to or compromising the ANILCA priority⁶.

On behalf of the Association of Village Council Presidents, we thank Chairman Inouye and the Committee members for calling for this important hearing that directly affects our way of life. We will be happy to answer any follow up questions in writing for the Chairman or any members of the Committee that were not addressed during the hearing.

Quyana. Thank you.

⁶ AVCP Convention Resolution 02-03-01 “Attachment V.”

ATTACHMENT III

July 12, 1999, Monday

NATIONAL DESK

Alaska Torn Over Rights to Live Off the Land

By SAM HOWE VERHOVEK (NYT) 1932 words

KWETHLUK, Alaska -- In the clearings along the broad Kuskokwim River where the Yup'ik Eskimos set up what they call their "fish camps," this is a busy time. Families are racing to catch, cut and cure the fish that will last them a year, and salmon turn scarlet as they hang by the hundreds to dry in the early summer sun.

James Nicori and his family were up until 3 the other morning, stringing fish and stoking the alderwood in the smokehouse, not that the time of day matters too much at a point in the season when it does not get dark at all. In August it will be time for gathering berries and wild celery out in the bush. In the fall the men will hunt caribou.

To a remarkable degree, thousands of native people still live off the land here in the Alaskan tundra, taking 90 percent or more of what they eat every year from the great back country, the rivers and the Bering Sea. "This," Mr. Nicori said, beckoning to the Kuskokwim and the vast bush land beyond, "is our supermarket."

But 40 years after Alaska became a state, 20 years after land-claim disputes in the oil rush led Congress to give the people known as "subsistence gatherers" priority rights to fish and game, and 10 years after the state's highest court declared that protection unconstitutional because such natural bounty was for the "common use" of all Alaskans, the debate has reached a crisis point.

Cheering the natives but enraging sportsmen's groups and the state's commercial fishing industry, which are both largely white, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt announced recently that the Federal Government would take over allocation of fishing rights and schedules in federally owned sections of Alaska, nearly two-thirds of the state, on Oct. 1 unless the State Legislature acted. State lawmakers could keep Washington from doing so, Mr. Babbitt said, if they agreed on a constitutional amendment to guarantee a "subsistence priority" in times of shortage for those who rely on the land and rivers here for their primary food supply.

But the state's Republican-controlled Legislature has not reached accord on a measure to put before the voters, prompting the Democratic Governor, Tony Knowles, to warn that they could be letting in "the Trojan horse of Federal management" in a state that fiercely values its last-frontier style of independence.

In many ways, the debate over Alaska's subsistence culture starkly echoes those elsewhere over affirmative action, creating similar racial tensions. The natives say the issue is their civil rights, while the sportsmen say the natives are demanding "special rights" and unfair quotas.

But this fight is not over schools, contracts or employment, but over food and a way of life that in some respects has remained strikingly unchanged for centuries.

"This is not 19th-century history here, some historical injustice we can do nothing about today," said George Irvin, policy director for the Alaskan Federation of Natives, which represents the Eskimos, Indians and Aleuts in their battle for subsistence rights. "These are the last aboriginal Americans still striving to live as they always have, on their homelands. There has to be room in the American system for them to survive."

To an outsider, the dispute at first seems eminently solvable. After all, the subsistence gatherers take only 2 percent or 3 percent of the state's fish and game harvest a year, and polls show that at least 60 percent of Alaskans favor granting priority rights to such people. And the issue mainly arises in times of scarcity, which come every few years when regulators determine that fish are running low in some rivers or that caribou or moose herds have thinned.

But allocating these rights can be immensely complicated, which partly explains why the Legislature has so far failed, despite years of trying, to resolve the issue.

Who, exactly, should be defined as a subsistence gatherer? Although subsistence is rooted in native cultures, some white people also live off the land, while many natives live in Anchorage and Fairbanks and are just as likely to shop in a supermarket or eat at McDonald's as a nonnative.

Furthermore, insuring subsistence gatherers the ability to carry out a traditional way of life sometimes means, say, closing off rivers for several weeks to everybody else. That not only irritates those who fish as a hobby but possibly makes the difference between profit and loss in the season of a commercial fishing operator.

Beyond the logistical considerations, it is clear that the issue has touched a deep emotional nerve.

That is particularly true for nonwhite Alaskans, or native peoples, as they prefer to call themselves, who were the majority in Alaska into the 1940's but now make up only about 15 percent of the state's population. Many native leaders complain of mistreatment by the white majority, a sentiment clearly in evidence at a rally in Anchorage in May in which native groups pressed for protection of subsistence rights.

"Apartheid is alive and well and it lives in the Arctic, it lives in our schools, and I'm sad to say it lives in the halls of the State Legislature," Desa Jacobsson, who is Gwich'in Indian on her mother's side and Yup'ik Eskimo on her father's, told the crowd. Ms. Jacobsson, who ran unsuccessfully for Governor last year as the Green Party candidate, was jailed briefly several years ago after a subsistence fishing protest.

But strong emotions are also felt by many whites, whose numbers swelled from migration in the oil rush of the 1970's, but also include many who were born here and feel they, too, are natives.

"Our adversaries marched for 'special rights' -- and called it civil rights," says a brochure produced by the Alaska Outdoor Council, one of the principal groups representing sportsmen and sportswomen in the state. It urges members to fight efforts to "enshrine that terrible Federal subsistence law in our state's Constitution."

That law, Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, was passed by Congress in 1980, establishing a subsistence priority, loosely defined as applying to rural residents of the state and thus covering what it termed the "customary and traditional" uses of subsistence gatherers. That measure guaranteed that in years of low yield, steps should be taken to guarantee that those gatherers had first rights to the harvests of fish and game. It grew out of an agreement a decade earlier, reached in the rush to clear a right-of-way for the building of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, that native subsistence rights would be protected.

But those are the protections that the state court later deemed unconstitutional. And, after years of prodding the state to change its Constitution, the Federal Government is set to wield its hammer, in the form of Secretary Babbitt's threat to take over fishing management on federally owned property in Alaska.

The state has been managing fishing on those lands and has asked to keep doing so while it tries to work out language to protect subsistence rights, but Mr. Babbitt said earlier this month he was disappointed that the Legislature had not brought the issue before voters and that it was time to act.

About half of Alaska's 100,000 native peoples live off the land to a significant extent, according to the Alaska Federation of Natives. For some, that may mean taking only a third or so of their food from the land. But thousands, like Mr. Nicori and his family here on the Kuskokwim, get 90 percent or more this way.

The food involved runs the gamut, from berries and roe air seaweed to fish, moose, caribou, arctic hare and the parka squirrel.

The natives who live off the land are hardly living in the past. In many of their villages, there are motorboats and snowmobiles, satellite television dishes and Coca-Cola.

"There's no way you can stop it completely," said 64-year-old Mary John, laughing as she skinned a huge bucketful of herring one recent afternoon with her 14-year-old granddaughter Kimberly Kassaiuli in the village of Newtok, in southwestern Alaska. "Kids do like the taste of potato chips."

Across the village, hard by the Niutaq River, several of Stanley and Elizabeth Tom's eight children were inside the house, watching a Disney "Mighty Ducks" cartoon movie

as they also gutted and intricately braided fish with tundra grass, then hung them for drying.

Except for a big bowl of rice, lunch that afternoon at the Toms' small home came from the land: half-smoked salmon, dried herring dipped in seal oil, salmon berries preserved last fall.

"This is a big part of who we are and what we are all about," said Mr. Nicori, here on the Kuskokwim, who had nearly 100 king salmon and hundreds of smaller reds and chums hanging on the lines and in the smokehouse at his fish camp. "It is something we must never lose, no matter how modern the world becomes."

Under the current system, the state gives priority in some cases to subsistence gatherers. For instance, they were allowed to fish in the Kuskokwim for several weeks this year before it opened to commercial operators. But critics challenge that system, saying it is not strong enough to guarantee protection in all cases, as would the Federal law, which Mr. Babbitt wants enshrined in the state Constitution.

From 1994 to 1998, several rivers in southwest Alaska had poor fish runs, and around Bristol Bay, the state had to deliver fish caught elsewhere to nearly 100 communities, an act of compassion that was also deeply wounding to those who survive off the land.

Governor Knowles is expected to call one more special session, probably in September, in a last-ditch bid to avert the Federal takeover of fishing regulations on the Government's lakes and rivers.

Though both sides say they are open to compromise, it is not clear that much common ground exists. And an unlikely alliance of forces may work against an agreement: natives who favor the Federal action and conservative lawmakers who could reap considerable political hay out of the anger that a Federal intervention could spark among many white Alaskans.

Ron Somerville, a board member of Territorial Sportsmen Inc., one of the oldest and largest sportsmen's groups in the state, said it made no sense "to allow our state to institute a bad Federal law that discriminates against our own residents."

But Myron Naneng, president of the Association of Village Council Presidents, representing 56 native villages here in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta of southwest Alaska, put the matter in very different terms.

"We are a very law-abiding people," Mr. Naneng said. "But when obeying the law means that our children go hungry, something is wrong with the law."

ATTACHMENT IV

AVCP

Association of Village Council Presidents
P.O. Box 219, Bethel, Alaska 99559
Phone: 543-3521

RESOLUTION 02-03-07

TITLE: REAUTHORIZING THE YUKON-KUSKOKWIM DELTA GOOSE MANAGEMENT PLAN WITH CHANGES TO THE BLACK BRANT POPULATION GOAL AND MINIMUM POPULATION LEVEL

WHEREAS The Association of Village Council Presidents, Inc. (AVCP) is the recognized tribal organization and non-profit Alaska Native regional corporation for its fifty-six member indigenous Native villages within western Alaska and supports its member villages; and

WHEREAS AVCP fully supports its member villages' endeavors in all aspects of their self-determination, health and well-being; and

WHEREAS The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Goose Management Plan has protected both the migratory waterfowl on which our villages depend, and residents of our villages who engage in the customary and traditional spring hunt of waterfowl, by requiring certain minimal conservation measures, and by guaranteeing a meaningful role for AVCP, the Waterfowl Conservation Committee (WCC), and the tribal governments of our villages in enforcement and implementation decisions; and

WHEREAS The Goose Management Plan was renewed in 1999 for a two-year term ending in 2001, but has not been renewed since, even though all parties to the Goose Management Plan have continued to follow its provisions; and

WHEREAS Efforts to fully implement the now-legalized spring hunt recognized by treaty are currently underway, but it is desirable that the Goose Management Plan be renewed for at least another two-year period, in order to ensure that its protections remain in place until such a time as they can be fully incorporated into any regulations that will govern the legalized spring hunt; and

WHEREAS The current black brant population objective agreed to in the Goose Management Plan is 185,000 birds, and the current minimum population level agreed to is 120,000 birds; the estimated black brant population level last year was only slightly over 120,000 birds, and if it were to fall below

120,000 birds, all subsistence hunting of black brant would be halted under the Goose Management Plan as currently written; and

WHEREAS The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, and the wildlife agencies of Pacific Flyway states all agree that the black brant population objective and minimum population level have been set needlessly high for conservation purposes, and that by setting the minimum population level needlessly high, the Goose Management Plan creates an unnecessary risk of a closure of subsistence hunting should estimated population levels fall below 120,000 black brant; and

WHEREAS These agencies recently asked the WCC whether it would agree to lowering the black brant population objective from 185,000 to 150,000 birds, and the minimum population level from 120,000 birds to 90,000 birds, when the Delta Goose Management Plan is reauthorized; and

WHEREAS The WCC felt that this question of the proper black brant population objective and minimum population level was one that should be addressed by the Full Board of AVCP at this special convention, along with the question of Goose Management Plan reauthorization.

WHEREAS It is desirable that the Goose Management Plan be reauthorized with a recommendation that the black brant population objective be reset at 150,000 birds, and the minimum population level at 90,000 birds.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AVCP Full Board hereby directs that the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Goose Management Plan be reauthorized, as amended to reflect a revised black brant population objective of 150,000 birds, and a black brant minimum population level of 90,000 birds, and that this current reauthorization extend through 2004.

Adopted this 21st day of March, 2002, at AVCP's Special Convention in Bethel, Alaska, at which a duly constituted quorum of delegates was present.

ATTACHMENT V

AVCP

Association of Village Council Presidents
P.O. Box 219, Bethel, Alaska 99559
Phone: 543-3521

RESOLUTION 02-03-01

TITLE: REAFFIRMING AVCP'S POSITION THAT SUBSISTENCE CANNOT BE COMPROMISED, AND OPPOSING THE AMENDMENT OF THE ALASKA CONSTITUTION TO REGAIN STATE MANAGEMENT AT THIS TIME

WHEREAS The Association of Village Council Presidents, Inc. (AVCP) is the recognized tribal organization and non-profit Alaska Native regional corporation for its fifty-six member indigenous Native villages within Western Alaska and supports its member villages; and

WHEREAS AVCP fully supports its member villages' endeavors in all aspects of their self-determination, health and well-being; and

WHEREAS Our subsistence way of life is vital to our self-determination, health and well-being, and the physical and cultural survival of our people; and

WHEREAS Our subsistence way of life is under severe attack from the Alaska Legislature, which recently expressed its hostility to our subsistence when the Alaska House proposed a budget that would do away with the Division of Subsistence of the Alaska Department of Fish & Game; this budget proposal exposed the House leadership's true agenda of regaining state control over subsistence not to manage it, but to destroy it; and

WHEREAS Governor Tony Knowles of Alaska should be commended for his efforts, in the face of legislative resistance, to take the high road in abandoning the State's appeal of the *Katie John* case, and to try to find a solution to the subsistence conflict that would have brought Alaskans together; and

WHEREAS Despite Governor Knowles' efforts, we cannot be blind to the fact that Alaska will elect a new governor this November, and there is no guarantee that this new governor will be a supporter of our subsistence way of life, or will appoint a Fish & Game Commissioner, or Board of Fish and Board of Game members, who will respect our subsistence way of life, instead of trying to undermine it in favor of hostile interests or for political ends; and

WHEREAS It would be a tragedy if our people were to assist the State in regaining management over subsistence, only to pave the way for a potentially

hostile administration in Juneau that might manage our subsistence in a disrespectful and destructive manner; and

WHEREAS Even under the current administration in Juneau, state managers have not always granted subsistence a meaningful priority over competing uses during times of shortage, to the same degree that federal managers have; for example, with subsistence restrictions in place on in the Yukon and Kuskokwim drainages last summer, the Federal Subsistence Board closed sport fishing on federal waters, but the state managers left sport fishing open on those waters that remained under their sole and exclusive jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS Federal management appears to be working well, for the most part, and is more likely to provide meaningful protection for our subsistence way of life, at least for the time being and for some time into the future; and

WHEREAS AFN has spoken in support of Governor Knowles' proposed constitutional amendment to regain state subsistence management, despite some stated misgivings about flaws in this amendment as worded; and

WHEREAS In October 2000, at the AVCP Convention in Alakanuk, this Board passed Resolution 00-10-17, which recognized subsistence as an inalienable right of our Tribes, and directed that AVCP must "preserve and protect tribal subsistence ways of life from undue outside influences and pressures."

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT AVCP's Full Board hereby reaffirms Resolution 00-10-17, and recognizes that the no compromise position taken in this resolution prevents us from supporting any constitutional amendment which would allow the State to regain control over subsistence management at this time, when the current political climate here in Alaska makes it far from clear that state management would be consistent with AVCP's mandate "to preserve and protect tribal subsistence ways of life from undue outside influences and pressures."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT AVCP recognizes and appreciates Governor Knowles' efforts to bridge the subsistence divide in our State, and extends to the Governor our heartfelt thanks for his efforts to bring Alaskans together on subsistence, but recognizes that political forces largely beyond his control have made a return to state management too risky for now.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT AVCP opposes any amendment to the Alaska Constitution to regain state management at this time, but prefers instead the continuation of federal subsistence management until such time as the State of Alaska has had a true change in consciousness on subsistence.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT AVCP staff is directed to write AFN, to ask AFN to reconsider its position on amending the Alaska Constitution at this time, and to write Governor Knowles to thank him for his efforts, but to explain to him why AVCP cannot support a return to state management at this time, in light of the mandate of Resolution 00-10-17, and the fundamental importance of preserving and protecting our tribal subsistence ways of life from the undue outside influences and pressures that hostile legislators and potentially unsympathetic state officials have directed, or may direct, against our vital subsistence traditions and cultural practices.

Adopted this 21st day of March, 2002, at AVCP's Special Convention in Bethel, Alaska, at which a duly constituted quorum of delegates was present.