September 8, 2021

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Daniel Sullivan
United States Senate
702 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Don Young
United States House of Representatives
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Request for Field Hearing on the State of Salmon in Alaska

Dear Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan, and Congressman Young:

On behalf of the Association of Village Council Presidents, Kawerak Inc., Tanana Chiefs Conference, and the Alaska Federation of Natives, we request that the Alaska Congressional Delegation hold a field hearing on the State of Salmon in Alaska.

Healthy and abundant salmon stocks are vital for the nutritional, cultural, and economic well-being of our tribal communities. Salmon are essential for food security and provide economic benefits to commercial and subsistence fishermen, fisheries and canneries employees, and their families in areas with the highest cost of living and unemployment rates in, not only the State of Alaska, but the entire Nation.

While tribal communities have experienced fisheries disasters and community economic hardship many times over the last thirty years, the declines in the last two years have been extreme. In 2020, the State of Alaska declared fisheries disasters for the Chignik, Kuskokwim River, Norton Sound, Prince William Sound, Southeast Alaska, Upper Cook Inlet, and Yukon River salmon fisheries. The 2021 season has been even more disastrous, with Chinook, summer chum, and fall chum salmon harvests on the Yukon River estimated at 0% of average.

1 The March 8, 2021 requests from the State of Alaska to the Department of Commerce are still pending as of September 8, 2021, per the NOAA Fisheries website.
Due to the unprecedented challenges to our subsistence way of life and the economic health of our communities, we respectfully request a meeting with the Alaska Congressional Delegation for Alaska’s tribes to share these challenges with you firsthand and make recommendations for protecting these resources for our communities and our future generations. Please send your reply to Vivian Korthuis, vkorthuis@avcp.org or (907) 543.7304. We are happy to assist you in fulfilling this request in any way that we can. If you have questions or need further information, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Vivian Korthuis, Chief Executive Officer
ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGE COUNCIL PRESIDENTS

Melanie Bahnke, President
KAWERAK, INC.

PJ Simon, Jr., Chief/Chair
TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE

Julie Kitka, President
ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES

Cc:
The Honorable Mike Dunleavy, Governor, State of Alaska