Dear Governor Dunleavy:

The Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) urges the State of Alaska to declare a fisheries economic and subsistence disaster for the Yukon River drainage as authorized under Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation and Management Act. AVCP is the non-profit tribal consortium of the 56 federally recognized tribes of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, including the 19 Tribes whose villages lie along the Yukon River coast.

The 2021 fisheries season is unprecedented in that none of the tribal communities along the Yukon River have been allowed to harvest salmon for subsistence. Salmon is a fundamental part of our subsistence lifestyle, diet, and culture. Our communities are further devastated by the negative economic impact to our local commercial fishermen and salmon processing employees. For communities still reeling from the 2020 season, and still awaiting action on the 2020 Yukon River disaster request, the 2021 season has been catastrophic.

In 2020, our Executive Board passed a standing resolution to support requests for salmon fisheries disasters and economic relief when warranted. With Yukon River Salmon returns estimated at 0% of average, it is certainly warranted. Therefore, we join in the requests of the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association, the Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association, and our region’s tribes and urge you to declare a Yukon River salmon fisheries disaster immediately.

In closing, I again express our deep appreciation for your Administration’s efforts in working with us to coordinate salmon donations for communities on the Yukon River. Even though it cannot replace the loss of income or the loss of tradition, it showed that we as Alaskans will always come together to help each other – neighbors helping neighbors. Thank you.
If you have questions or need further information about AVCP’s support of a 2021 Yukon River fisheries disaster, please contact me at (907) 543.7304 or vkorthuis@avcp.org. Thank you for your immediate attention and consideration of this request.

Quyana,

ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGE COUNCIL PRESIDENTS

Vivian Korthuis,
Chief Executive Officer

Enclosure: Resolution 20-10-02

cc: Secretary Deb Haaland, Department of Interior
    Senator Lisa Murkowski
    Senator Dan Sullivan
    Congressman Don Young