

1 **MR. MAYO:**

2 We'll be discussing critical investment, decisions
3 for national security, energy, transportation and for
4 our communities. We're going to be covering a lot of
5 ground. We'll be covering things that are important.

6 When you think about mixing the two economies
7 that exist side by side in our state, when you talk
8 about the economy of the wild resource way of life
9 that is commonly referred to as the subsistence way,
10 this is actually a very well-established economy in
11 our state. It is different -- differentiated from the
12 cash economy. But we acknowledge and recognize the
13 importance of both of these economies. But they each
14 must be protected. They each must be respected.

15 And the concerns that we'll talk about today
16 will range very broadly. And we're going to be
17 hearing from our different panels, the Congressional
18 Delegation, the Governor's office, the Lieutenant
19 Governor's office for the State of Alaska.

20 The Secretary of the Interior will be joining
21 us. And also we have members of our military who are
22 present with us as well, as well as the board of
23 directors for the AFN, Alaska Federation of Natives,
24 President Julie Kitka and our supporting staff.

25

16 **COLONEL DON:** Good morning. Thank you. I

17 want to first recognize our host for today, Secretary
18 Zinke, for hosting this event as well as our co-hosts,
19 Senators Murkowski, Sullivan and Congressman Young.

20 Also want to recognize the administration
21 officials who have taken time to be here today, OMB
22 Director, Mick Mulvaney; Mr. Bernhardt, Mr. Kennedy
23 and Mr. Wong, who are part -- with the Department of
24 Interior; NOAA; and the Small Business Administration.

25 Also want to recognize our military
1 leadership today. Got Lieutenant General Wilsbach
2 from the Alaskan Command, Major General Hummel from
3 the Alaska National Guard, and Rear Admiral McAllister
4 from the 17th Coast Guard District.

25 So the referenced document for today is our
1 2017 national security strategy. I want to highlight
2 the four pillars of our country's national security
3 strategy that was most recently released in December.

4 I'm going to talk about how Alaska supports
5 and complements those national security interests and
6 some of the key issues related to ensuring our great
7 state continues to contribute and build on those
8 priorities.

9 The first pillar is to protect the American
10 people, the homeland and the American way of life. A
11 layered missile defense system will defend our
12 homeland against missile strikes. Specifically, the

13 2017 national security strategy highlights a layered
14 missile defense capability which acts to defend the
15 homeland. The Alaska Army National Guard contributes
16 directly to this homeland defense mission, as one of
17 several states in the country with ground-based
18 missile capability. The 49th Missile Defense
19 Battalion located at Fort Greely in Delta Junction
20 serves as one of several layers of defense against
21 potential intercontinental ballistic missile and other
22 threats from nation states who wish to threaten
23 America, our citizens, and our way of life.

24 There's been recent action to increase the
25 number of -- or increase the capability of the 49th
1 Missile Defense Battalion, and these actions to
2 increase the missile defense footprint protecting the
3 homeland, again highlight the significance of Alaska
4 in our proximity to North Korea, China and Russia.

5 Number two, protect American prosperity.
6 We'll rejuvenate the American economy for the benefit
7 of the American workers and companies. Responsible
8 natural resource development will enhance America's
9 energy dominance and stimulate our economy.

10 Alaska has always played a key role in energy
11 security from the discovery of oil on the North Slope
12 to our most recent agreements negotiated by our
13 governor, with China, for liquified natural gas. In
14 addition, the 37-year wait on drilling in the Arctic

15 National Wildlife Refuge will continue to improve our
16 country's energy independence and security.

17 Alaska also has several other natural
18 resource projects such as the Donlin Creek Mine in
19 Western Alaska that will continue to play a role in
20 the national economy and strengthen the economies of
21 our state and the Yukon-Kuskokwim region.

22 Federal, state and local governments will
23 work together with private industry to improve our
24 airports, our seaports, waterways, roads, railways,
25 transit systems and telecommunications.

1 The United States will use our strategic
2 advantage as a leading natural gas producer to
3 transform transportation and manufacturing. Alaska's
4 transportation, our seaports, airports, waterways,
5 roads and railway are critical needs, to continue to
6 enhance our strategic contributions to our growing
7 security footprint and development of our energy
8 projects.

9 The vastness of our state coastline and
10 limited road, airport and seaport infrastructure will
11 require cooperation from the administration, state,
12 and private industry to continue to provide support to
13 the national security strategy and continue to promote
14 American prosperity.

15 Number three, preserve peace through strength
16 by rebuilding our military so that it remains

17 preeminent and it deters our adversaries and, if
18 necessary, to fight and win.

19 Alaska has an Army and Air Force footprint.
20 United States Army Alaska and the Alaskan Command.
21 This Army and Air Force footprint has and will
22 continue to contribute to the global war on terrorism
23 and active conflict areas in Iraq and Afghanistan and
24 other parts of the world.

25 Recently, the Department of Defense selected
1 Eielson Air Force Base to receive two squadrons of
2 F-35 Joint Strike Fighters. This basing decision,
3 along with other military capabilities, continues to
4 reinforce strategic significance of Alaska and the
5 importance of our state in protecting our vital
6 national interests that have in recent weeks become
7 even more important.

8 Number four, advance American influence.
9 Allies and partners magnify our power. We expect them
10 to shoulder a fair share of the burden of
11 responsibility to protect against common threats.

12 In this area, the Alaska Army National Guard
13 plays a small but important role in what is referred
14 to as the security cooperation program.

15 The Alaska National Guard participates in
16 what is called the state partnership program, national
17 Guard states that are partnered with countries who
18 aspire democratic values and are formed within their

19 military.

20 Alaska has partnered with Mongolia, a country
21 who has a history with some of our potential
22 adversaries. Northeast Asia is a critical part of the
23 world in an area where we have guardsmen in country
24 working with the Mongolian military on issues of
25 military professionalism as well as tactics,
1 techniques and procedures for domestic response,
2 something the National Guard knows plenty about.

3 More importantly, Mongolia has pledged
4 soldiers as part of the NATO coalitions in Iraq and
5 Afghanistan, under the condition that National
6 Guardsmen accompany them into country as advisers, a
7 significant nod to the importance of that relationship
8 and our contributions to that national security
9 interest.

10 To prevail, we must integrate all elements of
11 national power, political, economic and military. All
12 of these instruments of power are present, and the
13 Alaska National Guard is playing a small but important
14 role in this task.

15 So Alaska is in a key place for our country's
16 security architecture and a key player in our
17 country's national security strategy as we've
18 discussed very briefly here, in reviewing the four
19 pillars of our administration's national security
20 strategy.

21 As we've highlighted the needs and
22 contributions of Alaska, our requirements all touch
23 the pillars of our national security strategy and our
24 interests. And they require improvements in our
25 airport, our seaports, road networks and basic
1 infrastructure to continue to support the overall
2 strategy and economy.

3 Alaska has, over the years, assumed a key
4 place in our country's aspiration for energy
5 independence, in the most recent developments within
6 the last few months with our liquified natural gas
7 agreements and ANWR. And several large-scale natural
8 resource projects have the potential to continue to
9 move the needle forward on our country's energy
10 security and independence.

11 In a security environment, the United States
12 has acknowledged the strategic investments our
13 potential adversaries have made within their
14 militaries. The U.S. must remain predominant to
15 achieve our diplomatic and economic goals. This
16 instrument of power allows our leaders to talk from a
17 position of strength.

18 Alaska's strategic location and the country's
19 investments in our security footprint to provide an
20 increased missile defense, increasing air and Army
21 capability will do much to protect our vital national
22 interests.

23 In energy, energy dominance means preserving
24 and enhancing the United States' position at the
25 center of the global energy system, as a leading
1 producer, consumer and innovator in the energy sector.
2 Energy dominance allows us to boost U.S.
3 competitiveness, create jobs and improve U.S. trade
4 imbalance through increased exports of energy
5 resources, technologies and service.

6 Through energy dominance, we will also
7 provide stability to the global energy arena and help
8 allies and partners become more resilient against
9 coercion, using energy.

10 Alaska will play a key role in our
11 aspirations for energy independence and security, and
12 we'll look forward to continued investments from all
13 sectors to continue to chart a course to make this a
14 reality.

1

23 MS. KITKA:

7 Our first panel is on challenges at our
8 border, perspectives on current risks, threats and
9 opportunities in Alaska and the far north.

10 And I appreciate Colonel Wayne Don's comments
11 about Mongolia and the partnership that we have. And
12 just for reference, one of the things that Congressman
13 Young is doing on behalf of AFN is doing a domestic
14 version of the millennium challenge compacting that

15 the U.S. does with Mongolia. And they just completed
16 the last -- the second five-year compact with Mongolia
17 now for ten years, which is a five-year compact. And
18 we have talked to Secretary Zinke and the delegation
19 about allowing the opportunity for five-year compacts
20 for Alaska Natives.

3 **GENERAL WILSBACH:**

2 Well, today I'm here to represent General
3 Robinson, who's the commander of the Northern Command
4 and also the north -- the North American Air Defense
5 Command. And her primary responsibility is defense of
6 North America, and my role in that is Alaska. And so
7 I will take the next few minutes to tell you a little
8 bit about what's going on in Alaska with respect to
9 national security. And I'll touch on a few things
10 about the changing environment and my partnerships.

11 If I could have the next slide, please.

12 People from Alaska are very familiar with
13 this slide. And the center of the slide is the globe,
14 but it's not the normal globe that you see that
15 pictures the earth from about the equator. And, you
16 know, generally those of us from America look at it
17 with the United States and South America kind of
18 centered in the globe.

19 No. This is taken more from the polar
20 regions. And you can see Anchorage is kind of at the
21 center of the map. And you see those red lines

22 emanating out from Anchorage.

23 And you'll note that the lines are about the
24 same distance all over the northern hemisphere to many
25 capitals in the northern hemisphere. And, in fact,

1 it's very difficult to see on the projection, but
2 there's a yellow circle that represents about a
3 nine-hour flying time from Alaska.

4 And you can see that you can get almost
5 anywhere in the northern hemisphere in about nine
6 hours of flying time, which is why Alaska is such a
7 strategic place on Earth, from the standpoint of
8 military power, because you can project power from
9 Alaska, which is why we have a number of forces based
10 there.

11 And, in fact, in 1935, Billy Mitchell, who
12 was really the -- one of the fathers of the United
13 States Air Force, said that Alaska was the most
14 strategic place on earth. And in 1935, they certainly
15 couldn't have realized the potential of Alaska, just
16 because their technology didn't allow them to do what
17 we can do today, which a nine-hour flight in an
18 aircraft is routine, as most of us flew nine hours to
19 get here when we came from Alaska. We can certainly
20 do that routinely. And so it gives us a tremendous
21 capability.

22 In addition, you can see we have some sensors
23 in Alaska, some radars that help us to defend North

24 America. But when you think about the globe -- and if
25 threats were to shoot ballistic missiles at the United
1 States, on the far left of that globe you can see
2 Iran. And a lot of people, when they think of Iran
3 shooting at the United States, they don't realize
4 where the missile's going to travel when it launches
5 from Iran. But you can see it's going to go right
6 over the top of Alaska en route to perhaps this city.
7 And so having the ground-based interceptors based at
8 Fort Greely is certainly a very, very important aspect
9 of the defense of North America.

10 And so that's -- if I can go to the next
11 slide. We have a number of forces based in Alaska
12 that defend the air domain, so we have the
13 ground-based interceptors that defend in the space
14 domain. The ground -- on the ground we have forces
15 that are designed to defend from the air. So anybody
16 that might launch bombers or cruise missiles at us, we
17 have the capability to defend those.

18 And we also have fantastic training airspace,
19 and so -- and that training airspace is also good for
20 ground forces as well.

21 On the left-hand side of this slide -- it may
22 be difficult to see, but you can see the state of
23 Alaska and how big it is in comparison to the United
24 States. And then inside of those you see the
25 colored -- the colored polygons. Those are range

1 spaces that we can use for training.

2 That range space is about the size of the
3 state of Florida. Everybody in this room should know
4 that that training airspace is a national treasure.
5 You can't do the kind of training in that space
6 anywhere else in the world. Because of the size,
7 because of the technology that we've installed in that
8 range space, the crews that come to Alaska get the
9 best training that they've ever had in their lives,
10 especially when you start talking about
11 fifth-generation aircraft. And these are the F-22s,
12 the F-35s and so forth which are pictured there in
13 the -- in the slide.

14 Those aircraft require space to be able to
15 fully exercise the capabilities. And if you don't
16 have a large enough space, basically the -- the crews
17 are flying with one arm tied behind their back.

18 And so the next closest type of range space
19 that we have is in Nevada. And you can see it, down
20 at the bottom in red, the size comparison. It's not
21 even close. And so the crews that have the
22 opportunity to fly in this airspace, as well as train
23 on the ground in this -- in this arranged space, are
24 incredibly grateful for the opportunity.

25 Next slide.

1 So what you're going to see here is a quick
2 video of some F-22s launching on alert. So we
3 constantly have F-22s, tanker aircraft as well as an
4 AWACS, which gives us a surveillance capability to
5 defend the airspace. And so at a moment's notice, we
6 have crews on alert 24/7/365. They'll launch, and
7 they will go out and meet anybody that would
8 potentially threaten Alaska airspace. And so that
9 would be the defense of the air domain.

10 General Robinson is also responsible for
11 defending the United States against ballistic
12 missiles. And I would like to tell you that we have
13 this capability at Fort Greely not far from Fairbanks,
14 about a hundred miles from Fairbanks.

15 And what you're going to see on this video
16 is -- it's actually a test launch, so that -- the one
17 on the left is the intercepted, so this would be a
18 simulated ballistic missile. The one on the right is
19 the GBI launching. And so in the event that a sensor
20 would pick a ballistic missile coming up toward North
21 America, General Robinson could order a launch.

22 General Hummel's soldiers that are sitting on
23 alert at a console would pick this -- they would see
24 the sensor information. They would get the order from
25 General Robinson, and, they could launch those GBIs
1 and they could defend North America from any threats.

2 If I could go back to the previous slide, I

3 would like to tell you that the United States military
4 and the senior leadership of Alaska has noticed that
5 Alaska is a really important place. And what we're
6 seeing is quite a bit of investment in the state. And
7 so not only do we have, from the Air Force standpoint,
8 the 47 F-22s that are Alaska fifth generation, one of
9 the most advanced aircraft in the world, in 2020, as
10 Colonel Wayne mentioned, the Air Force is going to be
11 installing 54 additional F-35 aircraft, which is the
12 most advanced aircraft in the world.

13 And we're spending about \$900 million of DOD
14 money to install this aircraft in the state of Alaska
15 mostly with construction.

16 Once those F-35s are in the state, Alaska
17 will have more than 100 fifth-generation, which is the
18 most advanced fighter aircraft in the world, making
19 Alaska the most potent and lethal air dominance
20 platform in the world. There's no other place that
21 has 100 fifth-generation aircraft in one place.

22 And so once again, a strategic location
23 that's manned and equipped to be able to defend North
24 America, but also project force.

25 Well, if I could -- if I could change gears
1 just a little bit and tell you about our environment.
2 And for the Alaskans in the room, this will be old --
3 old news. But if you're not from Alaska, we are
4 seeing quite a bit of change in the environment.

5 And it really -- really starts with the
6 receding sea ice, which is impacting -- impacting all
7 of the Arctic, but certainly because Alaska is an
8 Arctic state, it makes our nation an Arctic nation.

9 But in the last 35 years, we've seen about a
10 75 percent reduction in the sea ice. And if you look
11 at this slide -- it may be difficult to see, but if
12 you look at the lateral differences in the last
13 35 years, it may not appear like there's a 75 percent
14 reduction. But when you throw in the vertical aspect
15 of the ice, and you take the lateral and the vertical
16 together, it's about a 75 percent reduction.
17 Basically the ice is not as widespread, and it's
18 thinner. And so when you think about a 75 percent
19 reduction, that's a lot. That's a lot.

20 And so what we're seeing as a result of that
21 is increased human activity in the Arctic, for one.
22 We're also seeing some other environmental impacts.

23 But let's talk about the human activity
24 first. So because there's more access to the Arctic,
25 different nations are wanting to get into the Arctic
1 for transit, for the same reason that we fly Great
2 Circle routes. It works on the surface as well. And
3 so we're seeing routes like Western Europe across the
4 north of Russia into the Bering Sea, which used to
5 take a month. Now they did it last year in six days.

6 There's also competition for resources like

7 oil and gas as well as protein. China and Japan,
8 Korea, Russia, they're all looking to get into the
9 market, whether it be for fish, oil or gas.

10 And so we're also seeing tourism. I know
11 many people in Alaska are aware of the Crystal
12 Serenity cruise ship. We expect more cruise ship
13 companies to come up and transit through the --
14 through Alaska waters as well. So we're seeing that
15 as a result of the receding sea ice.

16 But one of the other things that's happening
17 is erosion. And I'll show you a quick slide here on
18 some of the locations that we have. But this is
19 Oliktok, one of our radar sites that we have,
20 Northwest Alaska.

21 The lines on the slide predict where we
22 thought a few years ago the erosion would occur. But
23 you can see where the yellow line in 2016, it was
24 between the 2030 and the 2040 line. So basically our
25 prediction wasn't too good, because the erosion is
1 much greater than we thought.

2 Next slide you can see this -- this is at
3 Cape Lisburne, but that's the runway and there's
4 seawater on the runway. That's a problem. Unless
5 you're a seaplane, that's a problem.

6 And so we're ending up spending quite a bit
7 of money to try to fix -- fix the seawall there at
8 Cape Lisburne, about \$47 million to fix that.

9 But everybody, this is a result of that sea
10 ice going -- going away. And so we, in the military,
11 have to be prepared to be able to respond to some of
12 these. And I talked about some of these small
13 responses, but Alaska also is subject to natural
14 disasters like earthquakes and fall sea storms, which
15 are -- from those of you from the Lower 48, that's a
16 hurricane. And of course forest fires and tsunamis
17 and the like.

18 And so one of our primary responsibilities is
19 to provide basically support to civil authorities in
20 the event of one of these natural disasters. And we
21 are prepared to do that.

22 And you saw NORTHCOM, Northern Command, do
23 this last year with the hurricanes in Hawaii -- I'm
24 sorry -- in Florida, as well as Texas and Puerto Rico.

25 And my main partners, which I'll talk about
1 here for that, are sitting to my right. And speaking
2 of partnerships, they're critical in the state of
3 Florida. Much like you saw in Puerto Rico last year,
4 where it was an isolated island, Alaska is somewhat
5 isolated. Because of the distance it is from the
6 Lower 48, you have to have partnerships in order to be
7 able to accomplish your mission, whether it be defense
8 support to civil authorities or national defense. And
9 we have that.

10 And as I said, the National Guard is

11 certainly one of my partners, as well as the Coast
12 Guard. And we work together every single day in the
13 state of Alaska to do a number of missions.

14 But the Alaska Native population is also one
15 of my partners. And I've often said in forums like
16 this that if you're in the Arctic and you don't have a
17 relationship with the Native groups that are in your
18 country or in your area, you're wrong. The Alaska
19 Natives, as an example for Alaska, have -- their
20 ancestors have lived there for thousands and thousands
21 of years. And we continue to learn from those groups.
22 And having them as a partner in my mission from
23 military is extremely important to me.

24 In addition, Canada is another partner, so
25 the North American Air Defense Command, NORAD, is
1 officially a binational command, and we defend North
2 America together.

3 But you can see some photos here with some of
4 our partners. And that top right picture is a bunch
5 of U.S. Air Force senior officers on -- in Alert,
6 Canada, which is the most northern full-time military
7 settlement in the world. We got there in a Canadian
8 C-17. And so we do have a fantastic partnership with
9 Canada every single day. In fact, we have Canadians
10 serving in my headquarters at Elmendorf Air Force
11 Base.

12 So as a -- just as a note, NORAD is

13 celebrating its 60th anniversary this year, so in a
14 few weeks there will be a big ceremony in Colorado
15 Springs.

16 We also have partnered up with a number of
17 other Arctic nations. Two of them that we have a
18 fairly strong partnership with is Denmark, and really
19 that's through their Greenland Command. In fact,
20 we're going to have their commander in Alaska, here at
21 the end of the month, joining us at a senior officer
22 conference that we're conducting in Fairbanks as well
23 as Norway.

24 But all of the Arctic nations around --
25 around Europe as well as North America have common
1 interests, and we frequently get together with many of
2 our closest allies.

3 Well, let me close here. And I know you may
4 have some questions later. But, Julie, thanks again
5 for inviting me to speak. Alaska is such a beautiful
6 and unique breathtaking state. I am so privileged to
7 have the opportunity to serve there again.

8 And I want to thank not only the elected
9 officials, but the citizens of Alaska for making
10 Alaska a place where many military members decide that
11 they're going to stay or they're going to come back
12 to, because they love it so much. And they love the
13 place, but they love the people as well.

1 **GENERAL HUMMEL:** Good morning, everyone.

2 You may hear, as we go down

15 the line here of Alaska senior military leaders, some
16 things that we say in common. And I prefer to think
17 of that as not redundancy, but reinforcement. And I
18 think that if you hear the same thing from the three
19 of us, you really have an idea of what DOD believes
20 and what Department of Defense is concentrating on,
21 because we all come at things from different
22 perspectives, depending on our command. But if you
23 hear it three times, we're all focused on it.

24 I'd like to thank all of you, our co-hosts,
25 especially Secretary Zinke and Ms. Kitka, for

31

1 organizing this event. And events like this one are
2 really important, because they're critical to ensuring
3 that our message is heard, and the message is that the
4 Arctic and Alaska are critically important to national
5 defense.

6 So the Alaska National Guard and the National
7 Guard's motto is "Always ready and always there." And
8 in the state of Alaska, your Guard and its predecessor
9 service, defending the state and the nation, predates
10 our statehood.

11 It all began for us in World War II, and as
12 the threats have evolved, we've modernized and adapted
13 to meet them. And I don't need to reiterate the
14 strategic importance of Alaska to a room full of

15 Alaskans, and General Wilsbach talked about it
16 eloquently a few minutes ago. No one knows better how
17 activities in Alaska can affect Europe, Asia, North
18 America, the rest of the world than we do.

19 But for those of you who are less familiar
20 with our state, I'll take an abbreviated trip through
21 our recent history to illustrate our strategic role.

22 So in World War II, following the bombing of
23 Dutch Harbor, we faced the immediate threat of
24 invasion by Japan, and their intent to use as a
25 staging base to attack the Lower 48.

1 And to counter this threat, the men and women
2 of Alaska organized under the direction of Major
3 Marvin "Muktuk" Marston into a reserve force that we
4 all know as the Alaska Territorial Guard.

5 And the Territorial Guard had two primary
6 missions. Number one, defend the territory if
7 attacked; and number two, secure the airfields along
8 the Lend-Lease air route to Russia.

9 And I'll note what many of you know, that
10 governor's -- Governor Walker's father served with
11 this distinction as a member of another well known
12 territorial military unit, the first Alaskan Combat
13 Intelligence Platoon, better known to us as Castner's
14 Cutthroats.

15 Well, the Alaska Territorial Guard was
16 disbanded in 1947. And as the Cold War heated up, the

17 Alaska National Guard's 207th Scout Infantry Group
18 stood up and trained to meet the new threat posed by
19 the Soviet Union.

20 Scout infantry battalions were activated and
21 stationed across Alaska to maintain what we now call a
22 domain awareness on Soviet activities in the region.
23 And as in World War II, the scout infantry battalions
24 were prepared to defend against the invasion of
25 Alaska.

1 Today the Alaska organized militia, which
2 includes the Alaska National Guard, Army and Air, the
3 Alaska Naval Militia and the State Defense Force
4 continues a proud tradition of working with our
5 federal counterparts to defend against current
6 threats.

7 Alaska National Guard members assist on
8 countering those threats by alerting, refueling and,
9 if things go wrong, rescuing fighter pilots. Alaska
10 Air Guard personnel scan the skies and space 24/7 for
11 incoming threats. And if they detect an inbound
12 intercontinental ballistic missile, as General
13 Wilsbach showed you, Alaska Army Guard soldiers launch
14 the ground-based interceptors to preempt attacks on
15 our homeland.

16 And we do all of this every day as part of a
17 total force integrated Army and Air Force in our
18 state.

19 So I realize this brief history lesson is
20 probably very familiar to many in this room, but I
21 think it's worth repeating to reinforce my point that
22 we live our motto, "Always ready, always there." As
23 the threats facing our nation change, Alaskans will
24 continue to modernize to defeat the adversary.

25 One of those major challenges -- one of those
1 major adversaries is the changing Arctic environment
2 and how that stands to complicate military and other
3 operations. And last year the National Guard, along
4 with United States Pacific Command, hosted, in
5 Anchorage, the Pacific Environmental Security Forum.

6 We had participants from around the
7 Indo-Asia-Pacific region, 11 foreign countries, and
8 together we explored environmental threats to
9 stability and security and possible solutions to these
10 issues.

11 And one thing that we could all agree on is
12 that change in the Arctic is a bellwether for change
13 throughout the world. Again, probably redundant for
14 most of us in the room who face this every day, but
15 here are some of the many changes we are seeing.

16 As General Wilsbach pointed out, summer sea
17 ice continues to rapidly decline more quickly than
18 predictions, and the result, among other things, is
19 international tension to emerging commercial
20 development and transportation routes that had

21 previously been blocked by the ice cap.

22 Permafrost melt is profound and a serious
23 impediment to Arctic infrastructure and engineering.
24 Sea levels are creeping higher as a result of both ice
25 melt and through expansion by warming.

1 Sea storms are more frequent and more
2 intense. The coasts are less protected by shore-fast
3 ice, and both coastal and riverine erosion are
4 increasing. Birds, fish, marine mammals and land
5 mammals, which provide food for our people of the
6 Arctic, are changing their nesting, mating, and moving
7 patterns, as the habitats undergo rapid change.

8 There are positive biofeedback loops, which
9 mean that these changes are likely to accelerate in
10 the future.

11 The trend toward seasonally open waters is
12 driving increased increase, again, as General Wilsbach
13 mentioned, in investment in Arctic oil and gas
14 exploration and shipping and in commercial fishing.
15 So economic cycles in periods of recession may
16 temporarily inhibit these activities, but for the long
17 term, the trend will be upward, in part due to the
18 vast supplies of oil and gas in the Arctic.

19 As for shipping lanes, increasing population
20 in the Asia-Pacific and the growth of the middle class
21 and trade agreements have combined to create more
22 competition and increased traffic. And as a result,

23 transporters are hungry for faster and cheaper
24 shipping routes that the Arctic waters could provide
25 in the near future.

1 Well, in response to these changes, many
2 Arctic states are reexamining their military
3 capabilities to operate. Some have moved assertively
4 while others have been caught flat-footed and are now
5 hurrying up on plans to build or rebuild their
6 military Arctic capability and to reach out into the
7 Arctic with force-projection.

8 China has not been shy in asserting itself as
9 a near-Arctic power, a term that China itself has
10 coined. Their polar-class icebreaker, the Snow
11 Dragon, has traversed the Northwest Passage, and a
12 half-dozen Chinese merchant ships have tested the
13 Northern Sea route along the Russian Siberian
14 coastline.

15 Just last fall, China commissioned its second
16 polar-class icebreaker, the Snow Dragon 2, and it's
17 due to begin sailing in 2019.

18 Further, China has announced domestic
19 partnerships to potentially follow the Snow Dragon 2
20 with more capable and Chinese-built nuclear-powered
21 icebreakers.

22 If these hints weren't enough, in January of
23 this year, the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs
24 unveiled China's Arctic white paper, which lays out

25 its aspirations to become a polar power. This is the
1 only white paper ever announcing Chinese interests in
2 a region beyond its own territory.

3 So we know the Arctic security environment is
4 emergent and in a very early stage of development, but
5 what we don't know is whether it will ultimately be
6 predominantly cooperative or competitive.

7 Based on recent assertive action by Russia
8 and the reactions it is likely to engender, it seems
9 increasingly likely that military competition will
10 continue heating up. And although the Arctic states
11 generally emphasize their desire to maintain a
12 cooperative environment, several have made it clear
13 they will defend their national interests in the
14 region if it becomes necessary.

15 And so this is where we find ourselves today
16 amidst uncertain and unprecedented environmental
17 change within an international tableau teetering
18 between healthy practices, like strengthening
19 institutions for cooperation, like ensuring
20 environmentally sustainable natural resource
21 management and economic development, like involving
22 indigenous communities and the decisions that affect
23 them, and, on the other end of the spectrum, eight
24 individual Arctic nations acting less collaboratively
25 and more according to their own national agendas.

1 While we remain hopeful international

2 cooperation will prevail from a practical perspective,
3 we have to prepare for less desirable circumstances.
4 So with an eye towards strengthening our stance, the
5 State of Alaska has launched several initiatives to
6 support our nation's priorities on homeland defense
7 and homeland security.

8 Representative Young secured language in
9 previous national defense authorization acts to
10 incentivize service in the military in Alaska's rural
11 communities.

12 Prior to Representative Young's work, the
13 federal requirements for travel reimbursement were so
14 onerous, it dissuaded participation in an enormous
15 part of Alaska, as we effectively were
16 disincentivizing service among our rural people.

17 Being able to have an organized militia as
18 diverse as our population and spread around the state
19 so we don't have all of our eggs in one basket is a
20 key component of readiness. So we thank Congressman
21 Young.

22 As the security requirement of ICBM intercept
23 at Fort Greely and the space warning at Clear Air
24 Force Station expand within their increasingly vital
25 missions, we are working with National Guard Bureau,
1 with the Army Space and Missile Defense Command, with
2 the Department of Defense's Missile Defense Agency to
3 ensure our fore-structure is appropriate to do what we

4 need to do.

5 And as the U.S. Air Force modernizes its
6 fleet and stations F-35s in Alaska, as General
7 Wilsbach talked about, we will continue to work with
8 them as a key component of the best total-force team
9 anywhere.

10 None of this would have happened without
11 Senator Sullivan's success in including requirements
12 in the NDAA and Senator Murkowski's ability to secure
13 appropriate funding to see these requirements are met.
14 And we thank both of them.

15 To assist the efforts of our Congressional
16 Delegation in ensuring Alaska voices are heard when
17 discussing the Arctic, the Alaska National Guard joint
18 staff has secured membership on the Office of the
19 Secretary of Defense's Arctic strategy working group,
20 and we also have membership on the U.S. Northern
21 Command's Arctic capabilities working group to make
22 sure Alaska's interests are taken into account when
23 crafting policies and identifying requirements.

24 We also hosted representatives from nine
25 other state National Guards at last year's National
1 Guard Arctic Interest Summit which, was held in
2 Fairbanks and also in Utqiagvik.

3 At this meeting, we signed the first ever
4 Arctic interest charter for the National Guard. This
5 organization will be the primary developer for the

6 National Guard Arctic capabilities and policy. We
7 need all the help we can get to not only prepare for a
8 changing Arctic, but to amplify the message that we
9 are an Arctic nation, and we need to lean forward to
10 secure our vital interests.

11 We have been begun work with a number of
12 partners on a pilot program to use the unique skill
13 sets, authorities and domain awareness of the Alaska
14 State Defense Force for Homeland Security missions
15 that are problematic for Department of Defense federal
16 forces, whether due to funding levels, legal
17 authorities or the need for specific local area
18 knowledge. This program will establish scout
19 detachments in our rural communities and will enable
20 even more Alaskans to serve their state and nation,
21 especially those military veterans who wish to
22 continue to serve. When successful, it will be a
23 model for all other state defense forces.

24 I'd be remiss if I didn't mention, in
25 addition to all we're doing to ensure the organized
1 militia is modernized and ready, that, like General
2 Wilsbach pointed out, we do have America's premiere
3 training facility, the Joint Pacific Alaska Range
4 complex, which offers unparalleled maneuver space to
5 the forces of the United States, its allies and
6 partners. No other place comes close to providing the
7 amount of area dedicated to combine ground, air and

8 maritime training and maneuvers.

9 So across the state, our challenges are
10 large. They're many, but they're not daunting. I've
11 never been more confident in our collective ability as
12 partners to anticipate and prepare for change and
13 execute the appropriate actions necessary to build and
14 maintain a commanding U.S. presence in the High North.

23 ADMIRAL McALLISTER: It's really my privilege to
represent the

3 2500 Coast Guard men and women in uniform and in
4 civilian clothes that operate 24 hours a day, 365 days
5 a year in Alaska and in the U.S. Arctic.

6 I call them my family. We're permanently
7 located in 14 different communities throughout Alaska.
8 Like your families, they're spread all over the place.
9 We take a small unit approach to our operations, so
10 our smallest is in Unalaska or Dutch Harbor, where we
11 have a total of seven people, up to our largest base
12 in Kodiak, where we have more than a thousand people.

13 We take great pride in being part of the
14 fabric of Alaska communities. We feel welcome. We
15 hope we are welcome. But we take great pride in the
16 service that we provide throughout Alaska.

17 I'm going to talk a little bit about, really,
18 the maritime threats and opportunities that are out
19 there today and in the future. And I'm going to go a
20 little bit beyond national security, talk about other

21 types of security as well, because Alaska, as you all
22 know very well, is really a maritime state. And so
23 not only does our national security, state security
24 rely on securing the maritime realm, but our economic
25 security, subsistence and fisheries and other natural

1 resource activities rely on safety and security at sea
2 as well.

3 So you can see here -- I'm not sure if the
4 words are quite visible in the slide, but just kind of
5 a listing of some of the maritime threats or potential
6 threats that we face now and in the future. And I
7 wanted to highlight a few of these.

8 We have a pretty significant gap in our
9 ability to maintain what we call maritime domain
10 awareness or a clear vision of all of the activities
11 that are going on in this very, very large area of
12 responsibility.

13 And the receding ice, as was described
14 earlier, presents new potential threats with access to
15 Alaska; and of course, as a result of the significant
16 remoteness and the relative lack of resources, it's
17 hard to -- even if you know that those threats exist,
18 it's hard to marshal the resources to adequately
19 address them.

20 Of course we have continued oil and gas
21 exploration, particularly in the coastal areas. And

22 that presents the opportunity for spills that we need
23 to pay attention to in the Coast Guard. We have what
24 we call illegal, underreported, unregulated fishing
25 that is going on around the state.

1 I would tell you our enforcement posture is
2 pretty strong, and so U.S. waters, state waters are
3 well covered. But our neighbors -- and on the high
4 seas, as a result of lack of resources, face illegal
5 fishing. And we help our partners. And I'll provide
6 some more details in just a moment.

7 And of course the increased traffic that my
8 colleagues have already mentioned, and potential for
9 not only ship casualties, but potential for
10 subsistence conflicts which we try to work through and
11 avoid.

12 Next slide, please.

13 There's a few more threats depicted in this
14 slide again brought on by an opening ocean, but
15 probably not unique just to the Arctic, but to all of
16 Alaska. Everybody's, I think, familiar with the
17 Crystal Serenity that went through the last two years,
18 and she will not make a repeat performance this coming
19 year. But there are 16 ice-class vessels being built
20 by cruise lines around the world, specifically for
21 Arctic and Antarctic cruising.

22 So as General Wilsbach indicated, there's

23 definitely a customer demand for cruises in
24 ice-covered waters.

25 Significant research in the U.S. exclusive
1 economic zone, which goes out 200 miles, and then our
2 Outer Continental Shelf, we see lots of research
3 vessels from all nations in those waters. Many of
4 them are focused on preparing for claims under the UN
5 connection, the Law of the Seas, searching for oil and
6 gas deposits and minerals as well.

7 We see an increase in adventure sailors. So
8 in the upper right-hand corner, there's a photo of a
9 sailor that we rescued about 150 miles north of the
10 North Slope a few years back. That's a sailboat
11 sailing through the Northwest Pass. And we see an
12 increase in the search-and-rescue activity throughout
13 U.S. Arctic waters.

14 We have seen an increase in military activity
15 in U.S. waters. And, you know, a lot of this is the
16 growing military global presence of some of our peer
17 and near-peer competitors, particularly in the Pacific
18 region.

19 And as noted, there's an upward trend in
20 traffic, about 140 percent increase in traffic between
21 2008 and 2016. And the long-term projections remain
22 consistent, in that we'll see probably a two- to
23 four-time increase in that traffic by 2025, depending
24 on the presumptions that you make on container traffic

25 and oil and gas activity.

1 But the overall result of this is, you know,
2 from a Coast Guard perspective, an increased demand
3 for Coast Guard services.

4 Next slide.

5 I found that this was kind of interesting.
6 So this is publicly available. This is called the
7 automated identification system. It's the system that
8 we use to identify ships, particularly larger ships
9 around the world. This was just a snapshot that I
10 took on the 14th of September last year, and we put
11 flags of the various nations that are represented
12 here.

13 What's interesting is, in the blue line, that
14 you might or might not be able to see from your seats,
15 represents the exclusive economic zone. That's the
16 zone that the U.S. owns all of the resource rights to.

17 There are a lot of different nations
18 represented on this particular slide. You see Japan,
19 South Korea, France, Canada, China, Russia. You only
20 see a couple of U.S. flags. And the two that are
21 shown in this slide are both research vessels from
22 NOAA and from the University of Alaska.

23 And so it demonstrates to me -- it's a good
24 pictorial. It demonstrates the challenge we have in
25 just establishing the sovereignty and having a

1 presence, a consistent presence in waters that are the
2 subject of a lot of international interest.

3 Next slide, please.

4 So let me talk a little bit about the
5 opportunities that we have today and moving forward.
6 And I believe that the Coast Guard, in great measure,
7 has seized a lot of the opportunities to cooperatively
8 address some of the challenges that I described
9 before.

10 So as an example, we've done a number of
11 search and rescue -- combined search-and-rescue
12 exercises with both North Pacific and Arctic partners.
13 One of the great ones was co-hosted by ALCOM, NORTHCOM
14 and the Coast Guard two years ago, Arctic Chinook.

15 We followed that up recently with another
16 exercise in Iceland, involving all the Arctic nations.
17 And so we actually cooperate on a daily basis to
18 conduct our search-and-rescue operations.

19 Fisheries. As a result of warming waters, we
20 do see evidence that the fisheries activity is moving
21 northward. As I mentioned before, there is,
22 particularly in the Russian side of the maritime
23 boundary line between the U.S. and Russia, a lot of
24 illegal fishing activity going on. And we've
25 cooperated quite closely with the Russian border guard

1 to address some of that activity, because, as you
2 know, those are essentially pooled resources in the
3 Bering Sea and in the Arctic Ocean.

4 And so just to give you a sense of how
5 frequently we do that, in the last 16 months, we have
6 done eight combined operations with our Russian
7 counterparts, leading to five seizures or violations,
8 totaling 10,000 tons of illegally caught fish. And
9 so, again, because those resources are important to
10 both countries, we engage in a high level of
11 cooperation.

12 Same is true on oil-spill response. After a
13 long hiatus, we have reinitiated conversations and
14 planning with the Russian Federation. We have an
15 existing joint contingency plan for oil spills with
16 them. We've come back to the table. We've met twice
17 now to redo that plan, and we have got a commitment
18 for a joint oil-spill/on-the-water exercise. We'll do
19 a seminar this year and an on-water exercise next year
20 in 2019.

21 So, again, these are areas where we have
22 common interests, particularly with Russia, and that
23 will continue to work.

24 We have great relationships with Canada as
25 well. We have an existing oil-spill joint contingency

1 plan with Canada that we exercise every year, and

2 that's a very mature process.

3 And then speaking a little more broadly about
4 North Pacific partners, you know, we often look at the
5 Chinese activity in the North Pacific and the Arctic
6 with some degree of suspicion, but we cooperate with
7 China as well.

8 When we do our high-seas patrols in the North
9 Pacific, we take Chinese ship riders onboard our
10 vessels. And a lot of the vessels that we see out
11 there fishing have Chinese connections, whether it's
12 Chinese owners or they're Chinese-flagged vessels, and
13 they can take greater boarding and, if necessary,
14 seizure enforcement than we can alone.

15 And so those are the types of partnerships
16 that, again, get after some of the resources that are
17 important to all North Pacific nations.

18 A lot of opportunities out there for enhanced
19 governance. There's an Arctic Coast Guard forum stood
20 up, which has been very helpful, in terms of
21 information sharing and sharing your best practices
22 and annual exercises.

23 I'm pleased to note just recently the port
24 access route study, which many of you are familiar
25 with because you have provided the Coast Guard input
1 on those studies, which establishes a ship-routing
2 scheme, a safe shipping corridor through the Bering
3 Sea and Bering Strait, was actually jointly proposed

4 to the International Maritime Organization by the U.S.
5 and Russia. We approached the Russians, and they
6 said, heck, yeah, we want to join you on this.

7 And so that was voted out positively out of
8 the subcommittee at the IMO. And it goes before the
9 full committee here in May. And I suspect that that
10 will be approved, and therefore will become a globally
11 sanctioned ship-routing scheme which will help keep
12 ships in safe water.

13 We've identified deepwater for those ships to
14 operate in. They're away from subsistence hunting and
15 fishing areas. And they're far enough off of land
16 that if a ship casualty existed, then we would have
17 time to respond before that ship was in danger of
18 going aground.

19 Next slide, please.

20 One of our core -- one of the core elements
21 of our Coast Guard strategy is to engage with local
22 communities throughout Alaska. And, you know, that
23 helps us take advantage of traditional knowledge and
24 allows us to work to develop the capabilities,
25 capacities of local communities to be first
1 responders.

2 And this looks -- this comes in the form of
3 things like oil-spill training, safe boat -- boater
4 safety training, "kids don't float" program, in which
5 we interact with about 4,000 kids every year; ice

6 rescue training, cold-water training, mass-rescue
7 training, taking the lessons learned from Arctic
8 Chinook, our last big mass rescue exercise, and
9 bringing it to other communities to help them with
10 their plans and so forth.

11 For anybody who is interested, I do have a
12 handout here identifying the activities that we're
13 going to engage in this coming summer for our Arctic
14 Shield annual operation. We've been invited to
15 provide training in 31 different communities, and
16 we're looking forward to that.

17 And then lastly, the opportunity for
18 capability investments. I'll note first, because
19 there's a photo up there, you know, having
20 ice-breaking capability is important to our nation.

21 And I know the Coast Guard's very excited about the
22 fact that in this year's federal budget, we have got
23 some money to build the first heavy icebreaker that we
24 built here in the U.S. in 40 years.

25 I suspect that Senator Sullivan has been a
1 great advocate and Senator Murkowski, who also has
2 been a great advocate, is excited about that as well.

3 But there's a lot of other infrastructure
4 needs that, you know, still exist and will exist into
5 the future, things like making sure that we have
6 bathymetry and hydrography to ensure safe shipping
7 around the Arctic; the port services, the maritime

8 domain awareness that I talked about earlier. And so
9 there's some continuing challenges ahead.

10 So let me conclude just by saying there are
11 numerous threats or potential threats out there, but I
12 think that we're on a good trajectory, in terms of
13 cooperating on a federal, state and local level
14 amongst federal organizations and on an international
15 level to address some of those threats.

16 But cooperation isn't enough. Presence,
17 having the ability to be there, is important as well,
18 and so we're making some good inroads there.

19 And, you know, I feel like we're at an
20 inflection point, where, you know, we have a choice --
21 we need to make some needed investments to get ahead
22 of the traffic so that we're not a victim of it or
23 we're not responsive or reactionary to it.

24 But one thing I'll offer to you as certain is
25 that your U.S. Coast Guard, Alaska's U.S. Coast Guard,

1 will continue our leadership role to ensure the
2 safety, security and proper stewardship of Alaskan
3 waters, including the U.S. Arctic.

4
13 **ADMIRAL GALLAUDET:** I'm here to
22 tell you about what NOAA's doing for Alaska, and it's
23 a great story to tell.

25 But I'll start off, first off, in - under
1 this administration, NOAA has identified two top
2 priorities. The first we call weather and water, and
3 it's minimizing the impacts of extreme weather and
4 water events through implementation of a bill called
5 the Weather Act that was signed by the president last
6 year. And this is a bill that really details a lot of
7 great work with our observing systems, our models, our
8 people and forecasters to help save lives and protect
9 property. And we're already underway with this.

10 And for Alaskans, it really matters, because
11 the weather is some of the nastiest there is in the
12 country. And water in the form of ice, and all its
13 movement and its decline, is something also very
14 important to track and forecast. So that's our one
15 top priority.

16 Our other priority we call the blue economy
17 priority. And this one is kind of represented by the
18 image on the lower right that has to do with

19 increasing the sustainable economic contributions of
20 all of our ocean and fishery resources. Alaska is

21 blessed with the best-managed sustainable fishery in
22 the world, and we are going to do things at NOAA to
23 continue that, promote that fishery and keep that
24 world-leading status as one item.

25 And I'll detail a couple other actions that

55

1 are relevant to the state of Alaska in my next few
2 slides.

3 So next slide, please.

4 Now, our presence in Alaska is quite rich.
5 We have over 26 sites occupied by all six of our -- we
6 call line offices. So we have our fisheries folks
7 present in Alaska, several labs that do some really
8 terrific science that help inform our fishery
9 management rules and regulations, and a really great
10 partnership with fishermen in Alaska.

11 In fact, the head of our NOAA fisheries is
12 Chris Oliver, who led the NOAA fisheries in Alaska for
13 several years.

14 We also have weather forecast offices and
15 weather service offices, a total of 13, doing great
16 work, because I talked to Senator Murkowski and
17 Sullivan both, and they have both expressed their keen
18 interest in keeping our forecasters and great people
19 there because of the lifesaving work they do.

20 And then we have other assets in Alaska,
21 National Ocean Service does, as well as our office of
22 marine and aviation operations and others. So a
23 really great presence, and we enjoy all that we do to
24 help the people of Alaska.

56

25 Now, national security contributions of what

1 NOAA does are quite rich, and I -- in my past life, I
2 was a benefactor of those. And here you see me at the
3 Navy's ice exercise of 2016, which they just concluded
4 the next version of this last month.

5 And what we did during these exercises is
6 these two submarines would go and basically practice
7 operating in the Arctic. And it was really important
8 to do, because of the fact that the ice conditions are
9 changing so dramatically.

10 You know, you would think, okay, less ice,
11 easier to operate. Not so. The ice is moving so much
12 more now, that our submarine scrapers are really
13 having a hard time navigating. When the ice kind of
14 starts moving together, it creates these things called
15 keels, like underwater mountains.

16 And so they're trying to navigate between
17 these ice ridges and keels, and then the very shallow
18 bathymetry. And so it can be pretty hazardous.

19 So the work we do to support that is through
20 our National Ice Center in Suitland, Maryland. And so

21 for anybody visiting this week, I encourage you to go
22 take a visit there and see all the great work they do,
23 not only for Alaska but all of our forces operating in
24 the Arctic.

25 And also what's interesting, too, is that
1 some of the changes that are occurring -- not talked
2 about much -- are in the ocean. What we saw during
3 the last ice exercises, there's new oceanographic
4 features that can be exploited by sonar. It used to
5 be that sonar ranges in the Arctic weren't very long.
6 And so our subs could operate relatively safely and
7 undetected by adversaries.

8 Now, with these new features, there is
9 extended sonar ranges, and that means more chances for
10 adversaries to find us. Not good. And so we're
11 learning how to operate in those conditions, is what
12 our submarine forces are doing. And NOAA provides
13 much support, in terms of weather and ocean
14 forecasting, as well as ice. So it's great work
15 there.

16 Also, as an aside mention, I have kind of a
17 history here with respect to the Arctic in Alaska. My
18 last job in the Navy, I was the director of the Navy's
19 Climate Change Task Force, and we had a job to write
20 our Navy's Arctic roadmap. And so -- and it was
21 actually the second revision we did. The very first
22 version I wrote personally when I was the deputy

23 director in a prior tour. And so I've really been
24 excited and keen on all things Arctic and certainly
25 Alaska, and have visited your state several times and

1 have enjoyed it and looking forward to going back
2 again.

3 Energy development is something that this
4 administration has expressly supported through an
5 Executive Order No. 13795. And in that -- and you
6 have a picture here of Prudhoe Bay, which is the
7 largest oilfield in North America.

8 And so NOAA's role, with respect to energy
9 development, is in the permitting through Endangered
10 Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act
11 consultation and permits.

12 And so what we've done, which I think is
13 relatively novel and certainly I think good for
14 America, is that I have gotten with the Department of
15 Interior. I've met with Dave Bernhardt, the Deputy
16 Secretary, and he will be at a panel this afternoon.

17 And we have agreed on joint regulations on
18 how we interpret ESA and MMPA, and so that there's no
19 daylight between us.

20 The significance of that is this: Prior to
21 us coming into office, our offices, we had conflicting
22 views of our interpretations of those two acts. So
23 anybody trying to get a permit would go to Interior,

24 and they'd get a ruling, and then they'd come to us,
25 and they'd get a ruling. And then they wouldn't

1 match, and then you'd have to just cycle back and
2 forth and back and forth. It was really difficult.

3 So now permitting for energy development is
4 going to be much more efficient. And we're going to
5 see -- for those wanting to do that in a sustainable
6 fashion up in Alaska, the process will go much more
7 smoothly.

8 I'll also mention, as an aside: I worked
9 with Secretary Zinke when we were both commanders in
10 the Navy. And so he was a Navy Seal on the Seal
11 headquarter staff, and I was a commander on the staff
12 as well. And so we both see eye to eye on many
13 things, not only operationally, but also in terms of
14 moving forward and managing our energy development.
15 So that's a great opportunity for the state and for
16 the country.

17 Transportation and our support to that
18 involves our nautical charting. And the waters of
19 Alaska are poorly charted right now. So we developed
20 an Arctic charting plan, and we are going to
21 deliberately go through and start improving the charts
22 in the region so that we can promote safer navigation
23 and increasing maritime transportation and activities
24 in the maritime areas.

1 and cruise ship activity in the Arctic, Alaska this
2 last year just became the number one site for domestic
3 cruise destinations in the country. That's a pretty
4 significant accomplishment there and a sign of things
5 to come. But none of that's going to happen well or
6 safely unless our charts are updated. So we have a
7 very good plan to do that.

8 And then, lastly, communities. We are doing
9 much work to support communities in Alaska, ranging
10 from weather forecasting, as I mentioned, to working
11 with an outfit represented I think on the upper right
12 there by the erosion that's being experienced
13 called -- being experienced called Adapt Alaska. And
14 that's a great organization working to provide
15 information to communities on how to manage and plan
16 and deal with the environmental change that's
17 occurring. And so we're providing much information to
18 help that great outfit do what it does for the public
19 and Alaskans.

20 We of course, under the Marine Mammal
21 Protection Act, issue incidental-take authorizations
22 for Native Alaskans for subsistence hunting. And we
23 will continue to do that with close coordination with
24 the Native Alaskans as a service we enjoy and are
25 proud to do.

1 And then, lastly, fishing. I mentioned how
2 the fishing industry in Alaska is the greatest in the
3 country. And we'll continue to sustainably manage
4 that great fishery and look for ways to even become
5 better and optimize yields.

6 It's actually part of a larger initiative
7 that Secretary Ross is promoting, and that's to
8 increase all of our fisheries activity around the
9 country. We're calling it the National Seafood
10 Production and Competitiveness Initiative. And what
11 that involves is not only advancing our fisheries, our
12 maximum yields for our fisheries, to improve stock
13 assessments, using better technology like unmanned
14 systems, but also increasing market access of our
15 fisheries overseas.

16 Secretary Ross on a regular basis meets with
17 his counterparts, talking about trade. And we are
18 making sure that seafood exports are part of those
19 discussions, and that reduction of tariffs in key
20 markets like Korea and Japan will happen to promote
21 U.S. fishermen.

22 Okay. Now looking ahead -- last slide --
23 you'll see a picture of the Fairweather there on the
24 left.

25 And Senator Sullivan, I know my staff has

1 been talking with yours since our lively conversation
2 a few weeks ago. And we are committed to getting two
3 ships permanently in Alaska as soon as possible, and
4 I'll continue to work with your chief of staff to make
that happen
8 soon.

 We also have other
11 opportunities. You see on the lower right there a
12 picture of a -- what we call a Saildrone. It's a
13 company that produces these unmanned surface vehicles
14 that we're using today. We started out using them in
15 Alaska. We're going to be using them more in the
16 Pacific to take ocean observations, weather
17 observations, and even now starting to do fishery
18 stock assessments, all automated.

19 We lease the service, actually. We don't
20 even own them. And it's a lot cheaper than doing it,
21 I guess, the old-fashioned way with people, which can
22 be very expensive. So that's just one example of
23 innovation to do our mission better.

24 On the upper right is also, I think, an
25 opportunity that we'll see a growth in across NOAA and

1 in Alaskan waters. What you see there is a green
2 sponge that was collected by our deep-ocean research
3 vessel, the -- well, actually Office of Exploration
4 and Research. And it has been found, through a
5 partnership with North Carolina University, to have
6 anti-cancer properties.

7 So we're going to be increasing the amount of
8 what we call bioprospecting all around the deep sea,
9 in Alaskan waters and elsewhere, in an effort, as
10 genomics and the advanced computing technologies are
11 going to allow us to just do amazing things in those
12 fields, to better American lives, in the health and
13 pharmaceutical industry. So neat opportunities there.

14 So just wrapping up, let me say that despite
15 the many challenges of environmental change, security
16 and others, the -- I think the future is bright, even
17 on dark nights.

18 Next slide, please.

19 You'll see a nice picture of the Aurora.
20 Now, that's my symbol for saying that I think Alaska's
21 future is bright, because we have great opportunity in
22 business, in energy development, in transportation,
23 and in the Alaskan economy.

24

1 MR. RAZO: When Julie Kitka asked me to -- or
14 asked us to put together some priorities to discuss at

15 this panel -- and I was working on that back in
16 January, before the government shutdown, I had a
17 chance to reflect upon the conversations that I've
18 been having with Julie Kitka and General Wilsbach in
19 several different occasions.

20 And one of the conversations talked about
21 infrastructure in Alaska and the importance of marine
22 shipping and how actually, in Alaska, the port that
23 sits right there in my hometown of Anchorage, Alaska,
24 is a port that's been declared one of the security
25 pieces of infrastructure for the nation.

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1 And that's because in Alaska, about
2 90 percent of all the freight and fuel that comes to
3 our state comes through marine transportation. And
4 half of that comes through the Port of Anchorage.

5 So at Cook Inlet Region, you know, we're
6 concerned about being able to do business in our
7 state. And in order to do business, you need
8 materials, you need fuel, you need to get the stuff
9 that you're going to use to build with on the ground
10 in Alaska.

11 And in talking with General Wilsbach, he was
12 talking to me about how, you know, a cold-weather port
13 in the future is going to be necessary for all the
14 strategic reasons that we've talked about.

15 But more importantly, I think back home in

16 Anchorage, the Port of Alaska there really has some
17 fundamental deficiencies that have just come as a
18 result of age and not keeping up with infrastructure
19 needs. And it's something that's true I think of a
20 lot of infrastructure across the United States.

21 But there, there's -- in the port, there's
22 about 1400 Port pier supports that have lost
23 three-quarters of their thickness, these steel pipes
24 that hold all of the infrastructure on top of the
25 Port. They hold all of that up. They hold all of the

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1 freight up.

2 And the port has become in such a condition
3 that it completely needs to be modernized and needs to
4 take advantage of modern materials, modern
5 engineering.

6 And it seemed to me that because of the
7 strategic importance of the Port of Alaska, because of
8 all of the business reasons why it's important to have
9 your materials there on time and a place that has
10 access to rail transportation, road transportation,
11 other marine transportation, that that really is one
12 of our region's priorities, is to make sure that that
13 port stays open, that it grows, it becomes modernized,
14 and that we can continue to use that port for another
15 50 years. So we chose that as something that was of
16 high priority to CIRI.

17 Secondly, in our region, we do talking
18 amongst all of the Alaskan Native organizations, the
19 nonprofits, the tribes, all of the Alaska Native
20 organizations within our region quarterly. And we
21 call that the Tikahtnu forum. And it's in the
22 Tikahtnu forum where we get to hear very importantly
23 from our healthcare organizations and our social
24 service nonprofits.

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25 And the reason that's important is because

1 Alaska's facing the same epidemic that the entire
2 nation is facing, and that's opioid and
3 methamphetamine addiction. We have got an opioid
4 crisis in Alaska, just as many other places across the
5 United States have it.

6 And in Alaska, it's particularly invasive,
7 this infection of opioids into our state. And that's
8 because many of the small communities in rural Alaska
9 have relatively small populations, and it doesn't take
10 a lot of heroin or other drugs coming into the village
11 illegally to really make a difference and really
12 affect the lives of people and to a create unsafe
13 situations.

14 And for all of us, I think at least in the
15 Alaska Native community, we understand the dangers of
16 addiction and what addiction has done to our people.
17 And now we have something that -- a poison that is

18 much more serious and much stronger and much more
19 dangerous than anything that we've encountered
20 previously.

21 And so we're committed, as is AFN, to take
22 advantage of all of the opportunities that Congress is
23 opening up so that we can start focusing on
24 prevention, that we can focus on treatment, and we can
25 start educating our children about these dangers so

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1 that they understand the importance of not succumbing
2 to addiction. And so that became one of CIRI's second
3 priorities.

4 I want to say, I guess, to the AFN members in
5 the room, as an AFN board member, I feel it's very
6 important to participate in the organization, because
7 it's a two-way street. The more you participate in
8 the Alaska Federation of Natives, the more you can get
9 out of that -- out of it for your own organization or
10 community and for yourself, too.

11 And I found that to be particularly true in
12 working with Julie Kitka and in leading several of the
13 committees of the Alaskan Federation of Natives.

14 So I think it's really important that we take
15 advantage of the leadership we have with AFN and
16 attend these sorts of events, tell our stories, make
17 people understand that Alaska is really a different
18 place, and it's a place that very few people

19 understand.

20 One interesting conversation that I've had,
21 again, with General Wilsbach related to what's called
22 the JPARC, the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex.
23 And that is the land, sea and air training space for
24 the Department of Defense, the Coast Guard, all of the
25 cold-weather training, the open-range training that

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1 needs to be done if our nation's war fighters are
2 going to be effective in protecting our national
3 security.

4 And so consequently, I was privileged to tag
5 along here recently on a distinguished visitor trip,
6 along with Julie Kitka and Ben Mallott and now with
7 Senator Murkowski's office, to go and visit the Arctic
8 Edge exercise, which happens annually. And it's an
9 opportunity for cold-weather training.

10 In this case, it was Canadians, the U.S.
11 Marines, who apparently have not trained in cold
12 weather in a very long time. They've been used to
13 fighting in the desert. And my understanding was that
14 they had a great lesson to learn in coming to Alaska
15 in the wintertime and bringing their equipment and
16 understanding that what works out in the desert at a
17 hundred degrees above zero doesn't necessarily work at
18 50 and 60 below in Alaska.

But I'll just leave you with the fact that as

1 Alaska Native corporations, we're concerned about our
2 business and producing results for our shareholders.
3 And we understand that, you know, we're different than
4 tribes, we don't pretend to be tribes, and that we
5 work with our tribal citizens in Alaska as well.

6 But within the region and within Alaska, the
7 regional corporations work together, and we work
8 together especially in places like AFN. So all of
9 that working together, that partnership, is part of
10 our cultural beliefs, it's part of the unity of Alaska
11 Native people. And I'm proud to be an Alaska Native
12 person here today to talk to all of you.

14 MR. GLENN: If we talk about opportunities
7 going forward, I have some suggestions for you.

8 In trying to think about where we live, think
9 about the themes, the risks, the threats the,
10 opportunities for Alaska, for the Alaska Native
11 corporations, for those of us who live on the edges of
12 the state, which itself is the edge of our country, I
13 tried to think about some analogies that would be
14 useful.

15 One of them is the edge. We truly do live on
16 the edge. We can see the ocean and the skies. We can
17 see it in technology. We can see it in the
18 development of our people and our communities.

19 If you look long enough at the sky, you can
20 kind of look back in time. And those of us who live
21 in the coast and some in the Interior might see this
22 as well. You can see the contrails of jets in the
23 sky. And it represents the journey of an aircraft
24 across the sky.

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25 And sometimes you'll see some coming from the

1 west, and then they make a U-turn, and they go back
2 toward the northwest, because from the south came some
3 other contrails, and they kind of met at the middle,
4 usually right over our heads, and there is the cat and
5 mouse game of air defense that's been going on in our
6 region forever.

7 And the same thing happens in the ocean,
8 where if it's not a vessel that's bringing supplies to
9 our villages, if we look out into the horizon on the
10 north coast and the west coast of Alaska, we're just
11 as likely to see the Julong or a Russian defense
12 vessel as we are to see a Canadian or U.S. icebreaker.

13 And this business really close to home, the
14 fact that we are on the edge, and the fact that as you
15 go toward the north part of the globe, everything gets
16 closer. The neighbors are closer. The issues are
17 closer.

18 And I don't need to belabor the issues,
19 because I think the figures that we all looked at this

20 morning show how close we are to this edge.

21 But the edge has other parallels as well. If
22 you look at clothing -- every time I look at a jacket,
23 I think about -- especially like these all-weather
24 jackets, supposed to protect you from rain; I think
25 about whether or not the hood is going to work up

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1 north. And nine times out of ten, the hood doesn't
2 work. People don't know how to make jackets until
3 they make jackets for use in the Arctic.

4 Communication. If it doesn't work -- if it
5 works in the warm places, chances are it doesn't work
6 in the Arctic. Ships of course need to be
7 strengthened for Arctic service.

8 This is true for everything, from clothing to
9 the internet. And the fact that we're on the edge
10 means a lot of things comes our way and fails, but it
11 also means what has been proven to work in our region
12 can work almost anywhere in the world. It's durable.

13 I had the opportunity to help some folks from
14 the Department of Energy look at putting instruments
15 in the North Slope of Alaska that look up at the sky.
16 It's basically just glass-domed instruments that's
17 supposed to look at cloud cover, thermal profiles,
18 wind profiles. And all we had to do was figure out
19 how these scientifically modern instruments can
20 survive in an Arctic environment. And we thought

21 about the analogies. Well, just put a parka on it.

22 If you put a parka on it, it will work.

23 And it was -- it became the mantra for the
24 station. And now they have success in looking at the
25 changes in the atmosphere that are accompanying this

1 change in temperature, change in climate that we're
2 all talking about.

3 So we live on the edge. We live on the edge

4 technology-wise, defense-wise. Our communities are

5 there, but one of the themes I hope to convince you is

6 the people are a constant. They'll be there before

7 this or that new wave of technological change occurs,

8 and they'll be there afterwards. And it persists.

9 They transcend these waves of technology and waves of
10 change that keep going through our area.

11 If we talk about Alaska-specific issues for
12 the people that live there -- and most of the
13 Alaskans, this will be a familiar message -- is what
14 are the risks to Alaskans? And we know that our state
15 depends heavily upon subsistence, food resources from
16 the land and the ocean, the very same time we depend
17 on resource development for the economy, for our
18 communities. They appear to be in conflict, but those
19 of us who live there know they are a necessary
20 tension, because we need both of them.

21 And so legislation that threatens subsistence
22 way of life or threatens resource development,

23 responsible resource development, our region remains a
24 risk, and we play defense all the time to try to
25 prevent bad legislation from threatening the

1 development of our communities.

2 The threats include the national security
3 issues like we just talked about. But in this
4 changing Arctic era, they also include our economies
5 being bypassed by larger national economies. And if
6 you forget about the people that live along your
7 transit, you run the risk of an alienation of people,
8 an alienation of economies. And those of us who live
9 in those small communities, we run the risk of
10 becoming isolated in our own lands.

11 The changing world changes our coastline. I
12 was looking at the picture of Point Thomson, actually.
13 It wasn't Prudhoe Bay. But you were close. The
14 spits, the sand spits, the barrier islands, they
15 change, they move, they migrate.

16 And we are very thankful that NOAA has, for
17 example, initiated charting. Our grandparents'
18 generations were the folks that assisted the coast in
19 geodetic survey with the brass-weighted lines that put
20 the fathom marks along the marine charts that we use
21 today. Thank God there are some parts of our shallow
22 Arctic environment that don't change as much with
23 time, but the barrier islands, they're walking around.

24 And thank you for keeping up with modern charting.

25 The coastal erosion, it's just one visible

1 and ongoing aspect of the change that exists in our
2 world. When global climate change became a theme of
3 researchers and journalists, we, in the north part of
4 Alaska, would receive waves of interviewers coming
5 forward to get the story about change, global climate
6 change. They want to understand it better.

7 And they come like -- so I don't know. If
8 you think of yourself fixed while these sweeping
9 migrations go by, we have marine mammal migrations,
10 sweeping changes in the ice cover, changes in
11 waterfowl -- oh, the snowbirds are here, right? Well,
12 the geese have come in.

13 Well, now the climate journalists are here.
14 They come right after the snowbirds, but right before
15 the walrus.

16 And the questions begin. They're familiar.
17 But my answer started to get kind of rote, which is if
18 you want to understand change, get in line, because
19 things have been changing here for centuries.

20 In addition to the barrier islands and the
21 climate change, there's a sweeping cultural change.
22 And so it's just another one of these issues that we
23 have to be resilient about, we have to adapt to.

24 And that's one of the opportunities that is

25 left for us, which is to use technology to adapt, to

1 use technology to adjust, to move. The changes in
2 technology are coming so fast, they make me feel old.
3 And my dad and his research going back to the
4 Mayflower, and now even back to some noble people in
5 France and England, is one version of looking at
6 history.

7 On my mother's side, we have oral history.
8 We know about the changes and abundance of animal
9 species. We know that in the late 1800s there was a
10 fish famine in the Northwest. It wasn't caused by
11 anything that mankind did, but it sent a lot of our
12 people from the Northwest Arctic over the Howard Pass
13 and other mountain ranges and filled our region, so
14 their last names became our last names. Their people
15 became our people. And that was just one set of
16 neighbors.

17 This story continues as far west as
18 Greenland. And over -- I mean, as far east as
19 Greenland and over to the west into Chukotka, where
20 we're related by blood and by lifestyle, by family, to
21 the people who are on the other side of the borders.
22 The borders are not borders to the folks from
23 St. Lawrence Island or the folks in Anaktuvuk Pass, in
24 the Mackenzie Delta, folks in Kaktovik.

25 It's a huge spectrum of related people,

1 related family and related experience. It's the
2 resource. And it's always been the resource that the
3 various waves of either defense, national defense,
4 national resource development have come and learned
5 from and benefited from in our region.

6 Just in my region alone, you can look at the
7 footprints of vehicles on the ground and learn how oil
8 exploration developed with time based on the expertise
9 of local people living there, that winter's the better
10 time to move around on the tundra than summertime, for
11 example.

12 If you visit Kaktovik -- and Fenton Rexford,
13 my friend is here -- you'll see a community that moved
14 three times, once at the request of the Army, during
15 the Corps days, and twice at the request of the Air
16 Force, as they developed the DEW Line. The Barter
17 Island site was the very first DEW Line site built in
18 Alaska. We're talking about 1954 or something like
19 that.

20 And we heard that, at Cape Lisburne, the
21 changing climate's threatening the runway for the DEW
22 Line site there. But just think what it's doing to
23 the community of Point Hope just a few miles down the
24 coast, who, rather than being on the mountain side, is
25 on the spit in the lowlands.

1 What an opportunity there for continuing to
2 look to the people as neighbors. If we can bastion
3 and bulwark our runways of the DEW Line, let's think
4 about using the same material, the same mentality to
5 keep the coastlines protected for our communities.

6 If the people of Kaktovik are going to move
7 their village for a runway and a radar station, maybe
8 the folks who built the runway and the radar station
9 will think of helping them move again if it becomes
10 time to move their community from a retreating
11 shoreline. Those are opportunities to me as well.

12 The technologic changes bring a new pipeline
13 to our area, the pipeline of information. And with
14 that technological change, we change into a new era of
15 communication, where distance doesn't seem to matter
16 so much anymore. And we might be able to take
17 advantage of the cold environment, like our ancestors
18 have always done, using the environment to their
19 advantage.

20 This means new markets, everything from
21 server farms in permafrost, but it also means changes
22 in telemedicine, changes in Arctic research, changes
23 in education for our children. These represent --
24 like the oilfields did for my generation or the DEW
25 Line stations did for my grandfather's generation,

1 these are new jobs, new economies. So those are
2 opportunities I think that exist for us as we go
3 forward.

4 The Northwest Passage has been blown open.
5 Ships are going by, trade is going by, and we hope
6 that we can benefit from the positive impacts of such
7 change, rather than from simply suffering from the
8 negative impacts.

9 The era of defense first involved watching
10 for people to come over the horizon from another
11 foreign country, then watching for aircraft. And now
12 we're watching for missiles with radar systems and
13 eyes that never blink, looking at space. But they're
14 stationed in a place where two worlds of people are
15 getting to know each other. They have a lot that they
16 have learned from each other, but there's still a lot
17 more that they can learn.

18 And if my DEW Line father and my Inupiat
19 mother have taught me anything, it's taught me that
20 there's these two ways of looking at the world, but
21 they overlap in the middle. And if you can find that
22 place where the overlap exists, it's nothing but
23 paydirt, as far as good lessons to learn.

24 It helped me to learn about my natural
25 environment, it helped me to learn about sea ice,

1 helped me to learn about permafrost and geology and
2 staying alive in a blizzard.

3 And I think we're not done learning yet.
4 There's still plenty of opportunity.

5 And these regional corporations, as my friend
6 Greg had said, we occupy a front-row seat to the
7 economic opportunity, to the changing world, but also
8 in the responsibility to our people, our shareholders
9 and our community residents, to husband this change
10 and this interaction for the benefit of the folks who
11 live there.

12 NANCY _____? [WILL HAVE TO LOOK AT PHOTO IF I TOOK ONE]

22 I'm Nancy from St. Mary's Native

24 Corporation. I'm from a small village in Southwestern Alaska,
5 and we've got a lot of, you know, veterans in Alaska
6 that have served. And it's not just, you know, people
7 from today's wars, but, you know, our parents and
8 grandparents and great-grandfathers have served, and
9 our -- you know, our brothers and our, you know,
10 nephews and nieces.

11 So we have a lot of people in rural Alaska
12 that are veterans, and of course infrastructure is one
13 of those needs that we always have a housing shortage,
14 and homelessness and addiction. So with the opioid,
15 you know, one of the things that is needed is also
16 housing for a place for them to recover.

17 If we're going to be building infrastructure,
18 we need to have those -- housing for veterans and also
19 for our struggling family members and people who are
20 struggling not only in opioid or meth or alcohol, but
21 they're also taking a strain on our resources. And
22 one of those needs can, by providing housing, also
23 decrease a lot of that cost all around.

2 **MS. KORTHUIS:** Thank you. My name is Vivian
3 Korthuis. I work at the Association of Village
4 Council Presidents in Bethel.

5 Last Friday I met with the commander of the
6 Bethel post, and we discovered that in our discussion
7 that -- and he -- and you mentioned a pilot project
8 relating to building up the infrastructure in the
9 communities, in our villages. So we discovered in our
10 discussion that the -- he was trying to meet the
11 threshold of 130 servers signing on servicemen in our
12 region.

13 And I shared with him that we have the
14 opportunity to do that, in terms of our job centers
15 that we've created in our region. We have 21 job
16 centers, tribal job centers. By the end of the
17 summer, we should have 25.

18 So I'd like to hear a little bit more about
19 trying to build that bridge between the communities
20 and the service -- the National Guard service. And we
21 know that building that infrastructure will help all

22 our communities in rural Alaska.

23 So I offer AVCP support in meeting that
24 threshold, especially when we have job centers in our
25 region that will help do that.

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1 **GENERAL HUMMEL:** Thank you for the comment.
2 And to your point, the Office of Veterans Affairs for
3 the state, which is headed up by Verdie Bowen, we are
4 always on a quest to identify all of Alaska's
5 veterans.

6 It is more difficult than people would think
7 in order to find out who they are and where they are.
8 And so we're working with the department of motor
9 vehicles -- Division of Motor Vehicles as well as the
10 Permanent Fund Dividend office so that there are more
11 opportunities than ever to self-identify as a veteran
12 whenever you renew your license or you apply for your
13 Permanent Fund Dividend.

14 As far as your comment about building
15 communities, the Alaska National Guard has a full-time
16 Alaska Army National Guard recruiter in Bethel. His
17 name is Sergeant First Class Masterman. He's very
18 well known in the community. He has his own
19 Cessna 207 and flies it around the YK, visiting young
20 people. And we are experiencing a surge in
21 enlistments in the YK Delta.

22 And, again, kudos to Congressman Young and

23 his action on House Resolution 4424, which was
24 incorporated into the National Defense Authorization
25 Act and now gives us the authority to reimburse rural

1 Alaskans who have to pay their own money to come to
2 drill if there's no drilling location in their home
3 village.

4 And our next step is going to be to
5 try -- well, to continue to pressure Department of
6 Defense to actually fund that, because right now we
7 pay out of our own operating costs in order for -- to
8 reimburse folks for their travel expenses.

9 So Bethel is one of our readiness centers.
10 It's one of our armories. And so that is an
11 authorized place for drill. And we have a great
12 facility in Bethel.

13 The pilot program that I spoke about, and I
14 hope you'll hear much more about it, has to do with
15 the Alaska State Defense Force. We have a detachment
16 in Bethel. We have a new detachment in Quinhagak.
17 And the State Defense Force is a state-only militia,
18 so it is different from the National Guard in that it
19 doesn't train for the war fight. It can't be
20 activated and deployed outside of Alaska.

21 But it is a great paramilitary organization
22 that assists the Alaska National Guard. And we are
23 able to craft our own community-centric

24 mission-essential task list and our own types of
25 training that can answer requirements and needs, fill
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1 needs based on what a community desires.

2 And so I'm actually working with President
3 Kitka and some other partners to try to find ways to
4 have -- to develop a public private partnership which
5 can fund State Defense Force movement out into the
6 rural communities, because as a state-only militia,
7 there can be no federal funding. And so it's state
8 government funded only.

9 And so we have tried the last three years.
10 It's been in the Governor's budget. The previous two
11 years, that request didn't get out of committee.
12 Right as of yesterday, it was sitting in front of the
13 state Senate, a \$210,000 increment that was in place
14 by the new representative, Zulkosky. But don't know
15 whether or not we're going to get that funding. It
16 would go a long way, because then we could hire
17 part-time recruiters in a couple of rural communities.

18
25 **MR. TILDEN:** My name is Thomas Tilden. I was
1 interested in the 10,000 tons of illegal fish that was
2 being caught out in the high seas.

3 And I guess I had a number of questions.
4 One, I want to know whether or not that was yearly.
5 And then the other thing was what species are they?

7 the -- you know, sort of like us, they don't have
8 quite enough resources to be everywhere. They'll call
9 us and, say, "Hey, can you help us track down this
10 vessel," particularly as it's coming through U.S.
11 waters.

12 And so we'll send Coast Guard aircraft or
13 Coast Guard ships to intercept them, get additional
14 information on where are they and what are they doing,
15 what does the ship look like. And in most of the
16 cases, the Russians will send a ship out and intercept
17 the ship, based on the information that we give them.

18 As was mentioned by a couple of speakers,
19 within the U.S. waters, we have a constant 365-day
20 presence for our domestic -- what we call domestic
21 fisheries in U.S. waters, including a ship that's
22 always in the Bering Sea. And so, you know, we think
23 we have the right amount of resources towards our own
24 catch, but we certainly, you know, are always
25 interested in the growing trend towards illegal

1 fishing on the high seas. And, you know, we're able
2 to put some resources towards that, but probably --
3 probably not enough.

4 And I think the last part of your question
5 was: Is this the tip of the iceberg?

6 Illegal underreported and unregulated fishing
7 is a global problem. And as protein -- protein is a
8 national security, global security issue. And so,

9 yes, I think we are looking at the tip of an iceberg,
10 in terms of being able to work cooperatively
11 internationally to prevent that type of illegal
12 fishing, which hurts all nations at the end of the
13 day.

17 **MS. BISSETT:** My name is Hallie
18 Bissett with Alaska Native Village Corporation
19 Association.

20 I'm really excited to hear about the ships
21 and the energy development and all of the things that
22 are coming. But I'm curious: We've been a
23 resource-extraction economy and a military-type
24 economy for so long, and I'm wondering -- I was really
25 excited to hear the Admiral mention pharmaceuticals.

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1 And I'm wondering if there's any work being done to
2 kind of harness knowledge-based economies in Alaska.

3 And if any of you want to talk about that.

4 **ADMIRAL GALLAUDET:**

9 We're doing much work with local communities
10 in Alaska and around the country, really, NOAA. And
11 you mentioned pharmaceuticals. That's one. And I'll
12 talk a little bit about that broadly, in that the
13 technology that's advancing so fast that Glenn talked
14 about is allowing -- we're -- supercomputers. Our
15 knowledge of the genome and genomes of other species.

16 And so that -- we're doing much work in fisheries and
17 elsewhere to move that forward and be able to do
18 better in fisheries, fisheries management and health
19 and pharmaceutical applications, if you will.

20 I don't have instances of all of the exact
21 Alaskan efforts we're doing there, but I know it's a
22 broad NOAA effort across every line office in every
23 region.

24

6 **SENATOR MURKOWSKI:** I was thinking this morning about
22 what I wanted to share with you, the Congressional
23 perspective and where we are, the challenges and the
24 opportunities, from my perspective, one of the first
25 places that we look is how we fund, whether how we

1 fund our government or how we fund some of the
2 opportunities or how we face some of the challenges
3 that are inherent and that require the support, the
4 cooperation and the resources from our government.

5 And I think we recognize it's not always
6 about money, because you can't get the money until you
7 gain the understanding. And that is clearly the role
8 of your delegation here.

9 I'm often asked by kids when I'm in the
10 schools: Did you always want to be a senator? What
11 did you want to be when you were growing up?

12 And I always say -- it's very automatic. I

13 knew that I was going to be a teacher. Well, that got
14 derailed somewhere about my sophomore year of college.
15 But I feel like more and more on a daily basis I'm an
16 educator, trying to educate others about the
17 challenges that we face.

18 And so when we work to defend programs like
19 bypass mail or the imperative of the Denali Commission
20 or why, when it comes to USAC funding for our
21 telehealth, for our tele-education, it's so imperative
22 for us.

23 It's not just about getting more dollars than
24 the next state. It is working to educate and really
25 inform as to the need, because if we can't convince

1 others of the need of the uniqueness of the very

2 specific challenges, we're just one more delegation

3 out there arm wrestling for more federal revenues.

4 So this forum this morning is as important as
5 anything that I can think of, in terms of helping to
6 not only educate us, educate ourselves. I just wish
7 that this room had about a hundred thousand more
8 people in it, primarily members of Congress. We don't
9 have that.

10 But I think what we can do is build these
11 partnerships, build these coalitions, work with our
12 military, work with the administration, work with the
13 Congress, work with the people back home, work with
14 our researchers to gain that awareness and that

15 understanding.

16 I do think that as we think about the
17 significant challenges that we have in front of us
18 today, so much of it should be viewed through the lens
19 of opportunity that I think is unprecedented.

20 There's been a lot of discussion about
21 climate change and the impact that we are seeing as a
22 state. I think that this is an opportunity for us as
23 Alaskans to lead in a space of awareness, because we
24 are seeing.

25 And if you don't want to use the word
1 "climate change," you don't have to use the word
2 "climate change." But you have to acknowledge that
3 whether it's what Admiral Gallaudet is dealing with,
4 from the perspective of the oceans and what we're
5 seeing and changes in ocean acidification and changes
6 in fisheries, or what the military is dealing with as
7 they're looking to reinforce military infrastructure
8 that is now under threat, not necessarily from a
9 foreign invasion but from an environmental invasion,
10 these are considerations that I think we can bring to
11 the fore. We can have this discussion without getting
12 into the politics of who started it. It is a reality
13 for us. And so in that reality, how we, again, build
14 the awareness so that we can work to address our
15 realities.

16 I do hope that through this partnering that

17 we have built, that we can continue to build on, that
18 we can do more to portray not only the challenges, but
19 how Alaska is structured differently.

20 I look around the room, and more of you than
21 not have been engaged in different efforts to try to
22 explain to people on the outside what an Alaskan
23 Native corporation is, because an Alaska Native
24 corporation is not like an IBM or a General Electric.

25 And so what does that mean?

1 And we've been doing this for years and we
2 made headway, we make good headway as it relates to
3 the 8(a) program, for instance. But our reality is
4 that it's still an ongoing educational effort.

5 We still have much to do to educate those who
6 don't understand Alaska's unique history with regards
7 to our Native Claims Settlement Act and the fact
8 that -- very specific example -- so many of our
9 veterans who were eligible for a Native allotment were
10 serving in Vietnam at the time of the war and so
11 weren't able to apply for an allotment.

12 Now, decades later, they're seeking a level
13 of equity. But we're getting pushback, not because
14 they shouldn't have some entitlement, but because
15 there are those who do not want to see a single acre
16 of federal land transferred into private hands,
17 regardless of who would be entitled to that.

18 So making sure that there's an understanding
19 as to why and how this equity must be addressed. And
20 the folks from Sealaska that fought for years to get
21 their entitlements complete, that was a decades-plus
22 battle. So, again, helping to educate us on the
23 issues that are so significant, so important.

24

11 SENATOR SULLIVAN: this is a really incredible agenda,
14 incredible group of people, both the -- you know, the
15 people you invited to speak, but also a great turnout.
16 And I just want to thank everybody for making the
17 trip.

18 And I want to thank our military leaders on
19 this last panel. I think Greg was talking about it.
20 But I would agree. You know, we take a lot of pride
21 in our military in the state, and I always like to
22 brag about the number of vets we have in Alaska, the
23 incredible heritage of Alaska Native veterans serving
24 at higher rates in the military than any other ethnic
25 group in the country.

7 But it is interesting, in the last couple of
8 venues where we've been, both Alaska legislature and
9 here, you know, this panel, the whole agenda is
10 talking about challenges, and we certainly have a lot
11 of challenges. We're still in a recession. You know,
12 again, Greg and others talked about the opioid
13 challenge and the addiction and mental health

14 challenge. We obviously have a state budget
15 challenge.

16 But the one thing -- and it's interesting
17 when you talk with the delegation. We always are
18 starting to emphasize the opportunities and what I've
19 been calling, you know, preaching the gospel of
20 optimism, because there are a lot of really positive
21 things that are starting to happen for our state and
22 in Washington. You don't always read about it. As a
23 matter of fact, you don't read about it much at all,
24 because there's -- let's face it. There's also a lot
25 of chaos going on in Washington.

1 But what I want to do is just briefly touch
2 on where I thought those areas of optimism and
3 opportunity are, and then would love to take your
4 questions on it.

5
25 Well, we are making enormous progress on
1 that. And it's relative to what happened. Right? We
2 have national security challenges all over the world.
3 You just pick up the paper, and you see them.

4 But from 2010 to 2016, we cut defense
5 spending by 25 percent. Not a lot of people know
6 that. We heard it from the generals and the admirals.
7 I mean, we were crushing our military. And that
8 wasn't good for the country, it wasn't good for our
9 men and women in the military, and it certainly wasn't

10 good for Alaska.

11 And we're reversing that. We are definitely
12 unequivocally reversing these cuts that were not good
13 for the country and weren't good for our state. And
14 you saw the cuts even in forces in Alaska that were
15 happening, starting to happen.

16 And as General Wilsbach mentioned, we
17 constitute what I like to call three pillars of
18 America's military might. We're the cornerstone of
19 missile defense. We're the hub of air combat power
20 for the Arctic and Asia-Pacific, including with
21 100 fifth-generation fighters going to be stationed in
22 Alaska. No place on the planet Earth will have that
23 kind of power.

24 And then we're a platform for expeditionary
25 forces that can get to hotspots in the world on a
1 moment's notice, some of which are commanded by
2 General Hummel.

3 And we're building on all those, building on
4 all of those. In the last three years, the three of
5 us secured over a billion dollars in military
6 construction in Alaska. Good for the country,
7 certainly good for the nation's defense, but good for
8 our economy as well.

9 And Greg talked about meeting the Marines.
10 Now we're trying to get more Marines up there, so stay

11 tuned on that one. But there's a lot of positive
12 things happening on that.

13 This week, one of the unsung heroes -- and
14 Admiral McAllister's here -- that, you know, I don't
15 think -- deserves the credit that they warrant, is
16 we're debating in the Senate, we'll -- hopefully
17 debating the Coast Guard bill, and that is a really,
18 really important bill for our country, for the Coast
19 Guard.

20 And for Alaska, there's an entire
21 recapitalization program of the Coast Guard's assets,
22 ships, helicopters and other things, that's happening.
23 And not a lot of people are talking about it, but it's
24 very important, great for the country, great for our
25 state. We're going to be getting more Coast Guard

1 assets -- I'm confident -- to Alaska, and we're
2 debating that hopefully this week in the Senate.

3 Second, this is, to me, the biggest issue
4 that we all should be focusing on. We're finally
5 starting to making progress on our economy. You know,
6 Alaska is still stuck in a recession. We still have
7 the highest unemployment rate in the country.

8 You know, you talk about social programs and
9 what Congress needs to do. The best social program in
10 the country by far is a good job that gives people
11 pride and gives people a sense of purpose. And we're
12 certainly, I think, trying to make progress on that.

13 We've had a federal government now that I think is
14 really wanting to help us on our economy, not shut us
15 down On energy, you know, I don't have to
4 mention some of the things that were in the tax reform
5 bill, which we all supported. But there were some of
6 the big issues like ANWR. Some of the ones like this
7 tax settlement trust, which I think are going to be
8 great for our Native corporations, which, by the way,
9 I don't think -- the leaders of the Alaska Native
10 corporations who are here, I mean, I don't think you
11 get nearly, nearly the amount of the credit that you
12 deserve on being, you know, principal drivers of our
13 economy in the state for everybody, not just Alaska
14 Natives.

On the 8(a) program, where we've made a lot
21 of -- I've gotten a number of commitments from all the
22 service secretaries on how they're looking to work the
23 811 program, so it's not the Secretary of the Army,
24 Secretary of the Navy, Secretary of the Air Force. It
25 has to be the exclusive, you know, sign-off on those
1 kind of contracts. We're making great progress on
2 that.

3 Permitting reform, which is so important for
4 our state. You know, you obviously had that issue
5 of -- with Shell, when they were trying to do
6 exploration, it took seven years, \$7 billion to get
7 permission from the federal government to drill one

8 exploration well in a hundred feet of water, for
9 exactly the reasons that Admiral Gallaudet talked
10 about, which is, you know, 20 different agencies say
11 no, you got to come here, no, you got to come here,
12 no, you got to come here.

13 Just last week -- I was just mentioning this
14 to Senator Murkowski; you didn't see it make any
15 news -- the administration put out an executive order
16 that said on big permitting infrastructure projects,
17 one lead agency, period. One. And it will be done
18 within two years at max.

19 That is going to help our state tremendously.
20 It's going to help the economy.

21 Third, this is another one. This is kind of
22 in the baseball analogy. We just started, you know,
23 Major League Baseball. We're hitting singles on this,
24 but we are starting to get a lot of federal lands to
25 Alaska organizations, to Regional corporations, to

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1 TCC, to -- I mean, we're hitting singles on this, but
2 we've hit a lot of singles.

3 The home run that Senator Murkowski
4 mentioned, which is the Alaska Native equity Veterans
5 Allotment Act for our veterans who served their
6 country and still don't have the ability to apply for
7 allotments -- and we have the Secretary of Interior
8 who is 110 percent behind that, which I think bodes

9 well for that bill. It's going to be important.

10 Fourth -- and this has already been touched
11 on again by, you know, Richard Glenn, who always comes
12 up here with so much wisdom, and Admiral Gallaudet and
13 Greg, but I think we have -- and Senator Murkowski.

14 We have this opportunity for a place that can be the
15 hub of science and research for our young people.

16 And by the way, that would include,
17 certainly, traditional knowledge, but working with
18 NOAA. And we're very excited about this, getting more
19 NOAA assets up to -- the admiral and I have had a lot
20 of good discussions on not just the Fairweather and
21 other ships back, but let's do a whole scrub of the
22 NOAA mission.

23 If there are NOAA assets and research that's
24 happening in places that -- it's research folks in
25 Alaska, but it's not happening in Alaska, well, we

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1 need to work to start getting that back, because I
2 guarantee you if there was a, you know, center for the
3 study of the Grand Canyon, and it was located in
4 Idaho, the senators from Arizona wouldn't like that or
5 wouldn't think it was appropriate. So we're going to
6 work hard on becoming a hub of research again.

7 And fifth and, finally, optimism. And you're
8 seeing it, and I think it's part of the reason -- and
9 it goes to this education piece that Senator Murkowski

10 was talking about. We've had a real successful run --
11 and we're not done, we're not done -- on getting
12 Alaskans, great Alaskans in senior positions in the
13 federal government who can help people understand our
14 issues, can watch out for our issues, but also
15 implement national policy.

16 So who are those -- who are those examples?
17 Admiral Gallaudet already mentioned Chris Oliver,
18 right? He's now the -- he's an Alaskan top guy in
19 terms of federal fisheries. Drue Pearce, the former
20 state Senate president, is in a senior position of the
21 Department of Transportation.

22 Chris Hladick is the head of the EPA for
23 Region 10. He was the former commissioner under
24 Governor Walker. And now that we have the wonderful
25 Secretary of Interior, I will save

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1 the best two for last. Joe Balash is the Assistant
2 Secretary of Interior in charge of oil and gas
3 offshore/onshore, mining, the number one guy in the
4 country for that.

5 And we are now all very, very proud, and
6 everybody knows her, and she's a wonderful Alaskan, a
7 wonderful American -- she's going to be an amazing
8 job -- Tara Sweeney, nominated by the president to be
9 the Assistant Secretary of Interior for Indian
10 Affairs. We'll have her hearing here in a couple
11 weeks to do --

So we want to thank

17 Secretary Zinke for that. We worked it hard. But
18 here's a stat that I to talk about: The Interior
19 Department has six assistant secretaries. Hopefully
20 within the next couple week- -- two, one-third, will
21 be Alaskans. And that's great for our state and great
22 for the education component.

10 **REPRESENTATIVE YOUNG:** Mr. Secretary, Julie
11 and the rest of you, I'll be relatively short.

12 I think the biggest challenge we have is
13 within the organizations alone, AFN, and the villages,
14 and those outside groups that will try to influence
15 you, I think, in a negative way. I do believe that,
16 and you may not understand what I'm saying, but
17 there's those that say we have to put you back in the
18 old-age time where we can direct you what to do. And
19 by the way don't develop any of your lands. Economy's
20 bad for you. We have to let the government do it for
21 us.

22 And I look upon -- AFN has done an
23 outstanding job, and I believe the original intent of
24 the act, the Alaska Native land claims act has been a
25 success.

1 They'll be those that will say, well, we
2 could have done better, or we don't like what's
3 happening, or someone else is getting rich off this
4 act. And you'll have that dissension.

5 Don't have that, because with your unity, if
6 you work together and educate, yes, your members in
7 villages primarily, that are being told some
8 dishonesty, that you can achieve what I think the
9 largest group in America of influential input into the
10 way things are done in the state of Alaska and the
11 United States.

12 I am one that believes that very strongly. I
13 get criticized sometimes because they say I'm not
14 listening. I'm looking at the future. And we can
15 never stay behind. We have to accept and adapt. It
16 goes back to the mention of climate change. Lisa and
17 I may not totally agree with this. I do think it's
18 occurring, but I also don't think we've solved it, nor
19 do we have a solution to it. Just read the geology of
20 this globe. You'll understand what I'm saying.

21 We have erosion, maybe higher water and
22 things. Let's adapt to it. Just to say no will not
23 accomplish anything.

24 So I am pleased to be here. Hope to have
25 some questions. I'm quite excited about most of the

1 legislation the senators have mentioned, because it's
2 been out of the House now numerous times, including
3 the allotment program.

4 And we do have some pushback, which I'm going
5 to ask the Honorable Zinke on, from one of our BLM

6 groups, that they want to be able, in the bill which
7 I've introduced and passed, to select the lands for
8 the veteran allottees.

9 That's not going to happen. The original
10 allotment act was because of proximity, or what I call
11 past use of lands, and they have the rights to select
12 what they select, not someone else and a government
13 agency, you're going to get this piece of land, and
14 it's your allotment while you were serving in Vietnam.

15 So we have some challenges. We've done well.
16 I'm quite pleased with, very frankly, our Secretary.
17 I'm pleased with this delegation. We worked very
18 hard. And I like the cooperation I've been having
19 with AFN and the regional corporation heads. And
20 we'll continue that.

21

7 **SECRETARY ZINKE:**

9 I'm pretty bullish on Alaska. Alaska has a
10 lot of the same feeling as Montana; grew up. And out
11 front, my wife, her experience is she worked at the
12 Lucky Wishbone. Her father was a Native Alaskan, and
13 so our family has deep ties.

14 Up front, on policy of Native Alaskans, I'm a
15 believer in sovereignty. You've heard me say that a
16 number of times, and I mean it, is that we should work
17 as partners. But my job is to represent 573 tribes,
18 and BIA is the only people department. The other

19 departments in the Interior, so you know, it stretches
20 12 times zones. It's from the Virgin Islands all the
21 way out to Palau. And there's a lot of issues in some
22 of the territories, a fifth the territory, and the
23 number of bureaus -- an important bureau is BIA. And
24 it has been frustrating with the -- trying to get Tara
25 in. And I think she's terrific. And by the way, it's

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1 the first, you know, female Native Alaskan ever to be
2 nominated. And I think she'll get through as
3 Assistant Secretary. But, you know, Interior has
4 a lot of firsts. We have the first female bureau of
5 reclamation, in Brenda, as well as -- you know, you
6 want to talk about frustration. We just got our
7 director of the USGS. He's an astronaut. He has a
8 Ph.D. in earth sciences. He's had a top secret SCI --
9 SSCI security clearance.

12 And I will say probably he is the most
13 distinguished and the most -- as far as his
14 credentials go, in the history of the USGS as
15 director. And that's saying something, because you
16 have John Wesley Powell and some terrific directors in
17 the past. But over a year to get an astronaut
18 through?

19 And as Interior stands today, I think we're
20 at seven out of 17 Senate-confirmed positions. I had
21 Senator Udall over at the office with your senator,

22 and we were talking. And he's talking about when his
23 father was Secretary of Interior. He had everyone in
24 in two weeks. Two weeks.

25 It is likely going to be the case that
1 Interior will not have BLM, the Park Service or the --
2 some of other ones for probably two years, two years
3 in. It is unbelievable that this would occur. It's
4 frustrating from an Interior point of view.

5 What's not frustrating, I think, is Alaska's
6 future. The resources, we are pushing more authority
7 to the State for a reason, as the one size doesn't fit
8 all. And you recognize that.

9 No one knew in Washington, D.C. where King
10 Cove was. But you know. And that came down to a
11 choice between people and doing the right thing and
12 being held hostage in D.C. by people that have no idea
13 what the Aleutian Chain looks like, where King Cove is
14 or the issues a people face just trying to get to the
15 hospital.

16 And it did put our Coast Guard folks at risk,
17 because the weather is kind of tough out there. And
18 if you need to get someone to the hospital, you need
19 sometimes a fixed-wing. You know, it is the right
20 move, and you can't -- you can't get in there with a
21 helicopter. But it was the right decision.

And clearly the veterans
24 allotment, that is a morally right decision. And

1 25 we're working hard to get that through, and I'm pretty
confident we'll get it done in this administration.

2 But it's been a long time -- a long time with no
3 action.

4 And the President is a man of action. He
5 just wants to get things done, and he holds all the
6 secretaries accountable at getting things done. And
7 this is an example of getting things done.

8 And it really goes down to what we've tried
9 to do, is trust, is I want to trust the government. I
10 do. You know, I love my country, as you do. I want
11 to trust the government.

12 But when the government performs its mission,
13 where it doesn't listen to the people, where it
14 disregards the local voice or it disregards treaty
15 obligations, then the trust has eroded. And we have a
16 lot to do to regain trust.

17 Intentionally we've put a lot of Alaskans in
18 senior leadership positions. We work really well with
19 your Alaskan delegation, because Alaska, in many ways,
20 represents why it's important that states have a
21 voice.

22 Alaska's different, you know. Even when you
23 land into Anchorage, it just feels different. Because
24 it is. As people are pretty hard, they're
25 independent, and to the degree, they haven't had a
1 voice. And people feel pretty upset about it. And
2 you know what? You should.

3 But my commitment to you is Alaskans do have
4 a voice. We've selected, I think, leadership that
5 would articulate that. And with the help of the
6 Senate -- I already got the help of the House. But
7 with the help of the Senate, we'll get our people in.
8 And I think the future for Alaska, as far as your
9 ability to produce the energy that makes sense to
10 Alaska, your ability to hunt and fish that makes sense
11 for Alaska, and your ability to make a good living and
12 protect those elements of Alaska that you see -- that
13 you feel dear, we'll make that happen.

17 **MS. KITKA:** I do want
22 to thank you, Secretary Zinke, for coming today, and
23 let everybody know that we're so proud of him being in
24 office. When we tell our board and our folks about
25 you, we always tell them about your service as a Navy
1 Seal and how that the bulk of your service was in
2 Bosnia during the genocide that was going on there and
3 how tough that would have been. I mean, I can't image
4 a worse type of environment than to be dealing with
5 genocide.

6 And then as your commander role, the Navy
7 Seals, extracting war criminals out of Bosnia for
8 international court in Hague, that, again, you're
9 dealing with some of the most evil people on the
10 planet on that.

11 So when we talk internally about the
12 Department of Interior and engagement with you, we
13 talk about: We're not going to be whining to you.
14 We're going to be telling you how we can make things
15 happen and what we need to do to build our capacity to
16 build a good future for our children and our families
17 on that.

18 But we have an immense amount of pride in
19 your service to our country as well as the people that
20 are around this table, their service to our country
21 and our state.

22 **NELSON ANGAPAK:** Thank you. I want to thank the
23 Alaska Congressional Delegation for the support of the
24 Native allotment issue. I'm only hoping that support
25 will lead to the passage of the Native allotment bill
26 during the 115th Congress.

27 And to the Secretary, we want to thank you
28 for making that historical commitment that your
29 administration supports the passage of that overdue,
30 long bill correcting what should rightly be done a
31 long time ago.

32 **SECRETARY ZINKE:** Well, I'll say on a
33 personal note: You know, Vietnam veterans, you know,
34 that war was different. And in many ways, it's still
35 unsettled, you know. When I came in the Seals, the
36 Vietnam veterans were the trainers, and they were the
37 senior folks there. But I don't think that there's a

3 Vietnam veteran still on active duty today.

4 But this is a moral obligation. And the
5 Vietnam veterans aren't getting any old -- not getting
6 any younger. And so you look at them. I'm sure they
7 want their land to make sure that they can pass it to
8 their family, and so it is a moral obligation.

9 And I'm pretty confident we'll get it done
10 shortly, as we should. But, you know, I apologize
11 that it's been too long. But it's not the first time
12 that treaties or obligations haven't been met. And
13 we're working awful hard in Interior. When Interior
14 says something, I want to make sure people know that
15 you can trust that we're going to do everything in our
16 power to get it done. I think that should be a trust
17 relationship.

18 SENATOR MURKOWSKI: I want to thank you,
19 Nelson. You have been the advocate for so many for so
20 long on this issue. You have given voice to those who
21 really didn't know how to express their concerns with
22 this. So it has been through your dogged persistence
23 as an advocate for other veterans that this issue
24 continues to be on the forefront and now truly at the
25 forefront of Interior. So my thanks to you for your
1 leadership.

3 SENATOR SULLIVAN: And I'd like to just relay
4 a story, since Nelson's here and the Secretary's here,

5 but, you know, his first visit to Alaska after he was
6 Secretary of Interior, came up. We had a number of
7 really good meetings with AFN all over the place. We
8 put together a meeting with a number of our Alaska
9 Native veterans and, in particular, some of our
10 Vietnam-era veterans, but others as well.

11 And Secretary Zinke came to that meeting.
12 And I always liked the quote, because it was a
13 wonderful quote. It's very powerful. At the end of
14 the meeting, he looked at all these veterans, and he
15 said, "I started this meeting as your Secretary of
16 Interior. I'm ending it, realizing that I'm a fellow
17 brother in arms with all of you. This is a moral
18 obligation, and we're going to get it done."

24 **MS. BISSETT:** Yes. So my name's Hallie
25 Bissett. I represent 176 victims Alaska Native
1 village corporations. Thank you, all of you, for
2 being here today.

3 I have nothing but the utmost respect for
4 every single one of you up there. I've been hired to
5 speak on behalf of the villages. And I wrote down,
6 Representative Young, what you said about villages
7 trying to influence you in a bad way. And I take
8 issue with that. I would like you to further explain
9 what you meant by that.

10 And I would thank Senator Sullivan for

11 pointing out how important we are to Alaska's economy.
12 If we're talking about just the villages, last year
13 those that reported made up 20 percent of the top 49er
14 list. And so I would like to know what you meant by
15 that, sir.

16

21 REPRESENTATIVE YOUNG:

23 When we had the battle for ANWR, we had
24 people going in the villages suggesting they come down
25 there and talk against it. They have a right to do

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1 that. But my argument is they were influenced
2 impactly in a way that I think was very frankly not
3 the proper way to do it.

4 And when you have a village or villages
5 within the AFN that don't see the fact that you have
6 to be united, when you try to divide, then that
7 doesn't help anyone.

8 And if you would like some of that
9 information, I would gladly give it to you. But I do
10 think it's wrong for the villages -- and you know
11 this, and I know this. And some disagree with AFN.
12 That's not healthy.

13 You're all stockholders. You're all people
14 of the same tribes. You have a right of difference of
15 opinion. But when you divide, you can never conquer.
16 And that's my position and always has been my
17 position.

23 **MS. BROWER:** Hi. My name is Muriel Brower,
24 Muriel Katuk Brower. I'm from Barrow, which is at the
25 very top and down the road from Richard and also
1 Colleen.

2 I'm the Vice President of the Native Village
3 of Barrow, and I had heard -- some things that you
4 could pick up on is coastal erosion. The last few
5 years we've had storms that have ripped our coast
6 away. And we've had the local municipal government
7 out there with their loaders trying to build little
8 walls of sand to keep the infrastructure from being
9 washed away.

10 My question is: Is there going to be any
11 concentrated effort into the tribal program in FEMA?
12 Because as the tribe, we feel like we're not doing
13 enough to help protect our beaches. And that's one
14 thing that I was concerned about, just because it
15 keeps happening every year, and it seems to be getting
16 worse.

17 I had a comment. I heard about the -- all
18 the research that's being done. I think Senator
19 Sullivan had mentioned that. And I had -- you know,
20 I'm almost going to be graduating here in a few weeks
21 from UAF. I'm so excited.

22 (Applause.)

23 **MS. BROWER:** Thank you. Thank you. But in
24 the process of doing all my papers, it's really hard

25 to find stuff from my region on line. And I think
1 that having a centralized area of Arctic issues, where
2 somebody can go to find information, would be very
3 helpful.

7

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: Let me speak just real

8 quickly to your ask about increased support for tribal
9 FEMA dollars. The problem with FEMA is FEMA is the
10 agency that comes in after the disaster. When we look
11 at what is happening to so many of our coastal
12 communities and many of our communities in the
13 Interior that are on rivers that are seeing the
14 threats due to erosion, this is a slow-moving
15 disaster. And so our response agencies aren't set up
16 to deal proactively.

17 And this is a problem for us, because we're
18 seeing it not only in Utqiagvik, it is all around our
19 coast and, again, into the Interior.

20 I have met, and I know everyone else from the
21 delegation has met with the Corps, with some of our
22 other agencies, to discuss ways that we can be more
23 proactive as we're seeing these threats, because we
24 know that the cost to move a village, whether it's
25 Kivalina or Shishmaref, that the -- Newtok, the
1 resources are extraordinary.

2 And ways that we can be, again, more
3 proactive with not only the ability to slow or impede
4 the disaster from taking place, but it's going to take

5 some change within the agencies and legislative
6 authorities. So that is something that we're looking
7 at, but it is not just as easy as plussing up FEMA
8 dollars.

9 **SENATOR SULLIVAN:** And I'll just take a quick
10 comment on your question on research. You know,
11 Barrow -- I don't have to tell you this, and Richard
12 touched on it again, but really has not only been the
13 combination of traditional research, traditional
14 knowledge, but also the Navy's presence up there, in
15 terms of research at one point was enormous. And so
16 what I think we need to do together, with the
17 appropriate federal agencies represented here, is look
18 at that again as an opportunity.

19 And one thing that you're starting to see --
20 there's so much interest now in the Arctic and what's
21 happening, and the science and -- you're starting to
22 see universities -- you know, I think Stanford and
23 Yale and the University of Arizona, for God's sake,
24 you know, wants to be the lead, in terms of Arctic
25 research.

1 Well, Arctic research should be located in
2 the Arctic, which happens to be our state. So we all
3 need to work together. These kind of ideas of a
4 central clearing, you know, House, Admiral, maybe we
5 can work on that as well. But these are the really
6 good ideas that we need to hear from all of you,

7 but -- because it is an enormous opportunity. We've
8 been there before, both from the Fed side, traditional
9 knowledge side, and I think it's an opportunity that
10 we need to redouble our efforts on.

11 SECRETARY ZINKE: Coastal erosion. You're
12 looking across the country. Louisiana, primarily is a
13 disappearing coast, rather than a working coast. Some
14 of that has to do with the Army Corps of Engineers,
15 how it was engineered.

16 Certainly on the East Coast an enormous
17 amount of mining of sand is being conducted to shore
18 up coastal erosion. Alaska, you know, falls in that
19 in particular areas.

20 Now, the President is looking at how to
21 reconfigure Army Corps of Engineers a little to be
22 more proactive on their -- the way they do the
23 processes.

24 Right now what happens is the Army Corps of
25 Engineers get funded, but they don't get funded to
1 complete a project oftentimes. So we have hundreds of
2 projects that are out there that are 20 percent
3 completed, and they have to have new starts. So just
4 the process to get the Army Corps of Engineers moving
5 is pretty significant.

6 We think maybe on some of the things, Bureau
7 of Reclamation -- they reclaim land -- is an easier

8 route in some of these areas. But I agree with you,
9 is you have to identify what areas we need to
10 concentrate the effort and look at the process
11 involved to streamline it so we can get things done.

12 Interior, so you know -- imagine an
13 organization that hasn't been reorganized in 150
14 years. Well, welcome to Interior. And you look at
15 what -- you know, what occurred 150 years ago is a lot
16 different than the problems we face today.

17 And we're going -- we're looking at
18 reorganizing, taking Alaska as a "how to reorganize
19 first," because all our -- the headquarters elements
20 are pretty much all aligned, but looking at making
21 sure that one size doesn't fit all, because it
22 doesn't.

23 The issues in Barrow are a lot different than
24 some of the other coastlines. And our government,
25 which should work for the people, needs to be flexible
1 enough to carve out of a Washington bureaucracy so we
2 can actually put resources on the ground in a timely
3 and meaningful way.

4 So I look forward to -- as we go through with
5 organization, more forward on how it affects Alaska.
6 I think it's going to make a big, big difference on
7 our ability to get things done in states that
8 generally are not D.C. centric, such as Alaska and a
9 lot of the West.

10 **MS. KITKA:** Mr. Secretary, I had the
11 opportunity to meet with your deputy on -- Deputy
12 Secretary on Friday, and I really appreciate your
13 leadership and efforts to move from cooperative
14 management to co-management, and how he conveyed to
15 us, just get us the proposals. The orders to your
16 agencies have already been given to expand
17 opportunities on that, so we very much welcome that.

18 Also like to invite you to be part of a
19 public-private partnership that we're putting together
20 with General Hummel and the National Guard on
21 emergency preparedness and standing up the real
22 components of the state militia, we think where your
23 use of drones for domain awareness on that could fit
24 in really well with our public-private partnership.
25 And so we've had a chance to talk to Deputy Secretary
1 and Assistant Secretary Joe Balash about that on that.
2 But that could be just a really wonderful
3 public-private partnership as we pull other people
4 together.

8 **MR. TILDEN:** Thank you. Tom Tilden. I'm
9 chief of Curyung Tribal. I wanted to say a couple of
10 things here, first in regards to healthcare.
11 Healthcare is funded, I believe, at 45 percent of
12 need. And it really needs to be increased. And I
13 know it's very difficult to get -- you know, with the
14 budget crisis that we have right now, it's hard to get
15 money. But we really need that to be increased.

16 The other thing I wanted to talk about was
17 opiate abuse. It is happening in some of our smaller
18 villages as well as our larger villages. And in our
19 tribe, we started providing meals after school to
20 kids, because we know that opiate abuse affects
21 children's eating habits. And we started off with
22 only 100, 100 meals a month. Now we're up to 450.

23 And so that tells me that there are kids out
24 there that are being neglected, abused, and are
25 hungry. And this is something that I think that is
1 not only happening in our community, but I think
2 across the state. And we really need to make sure
3 that we have enough funds to deal with this issue,
4 both in prevention and in treatment and awareness,
5 because I know that it's not only in our state, but
6 it's across America. And so this is something I'm
7 sure that you could get some of your colleagues in
8 support of.

9 The other thing, in listening to some of the
10 reports that were made this morning in regards to the
11 piracy in the high seas affecting our fish, a lot of
12 our communities are along the coast, and we depend on
13 some of these resources that are being pirated.

14 There's other things that are affected. I
15 think that in listening to the folks that we need some
16 sort of international boundary commission for them to
17 take a look at how it has affected our subsistence way

18 of life.

19 When I look at the kings going up the Yukon
20 River, for instance, I realize that we have an
21 interboundary issue with the Canadians. When I look
22 at Southeast Alaska and see that the mining industry
23 is happening on the other side of the border, and the
24 fishing is going to be affected in Southeast Alaska.

25 So I really believe that there needs to be
1 some sort of beefed-up international commission to
2 deal with some of these issues that are affecting our
3 subsistence way of life.

4 But I do want to express: Thank you very
5 much for taking the time -- I know you guys are
6 busy -- for coming out here and listening to us today
7 and listening to some of our issues. Thank you.

8 SENATOR MURKOWSKI: Tom, I think it's worth
9 mentioning and reminding folks that with this last
10 omnibus that was just signed into law, we saw funding
11 directed towards IHS for Indian healthcare at levels
12 that we haven't seen before. And I think that that's
13 significant, because some of the issues that we're
14 seeing within healthcare are at levels that we haven't
15 seen before.

16 So whether it's the impact of opioids,
17 whether it is the ongoing killer, which has -- has
18 been and unfortunately seems to continue to be
19 alcohol. As much as we are directing resources and

20 legislation to address the addiction through opioids,
21 we have to make sure that there's flexibility within
22 these programs to make sure that we don't take the
23 foot off the gas when it comes to dealing with the
24 negative consequences of alcohol within our families.
25 So we are very much attentive to that as an issue.

1

SENATOR SULLIVAN: So I'll mention, Tom,

2 the -- as Senator Murkowski laid out, you know, I
3 think there's a lot of bipartisan support on the
4 opioids issue. It's coming a little bit late, but
5 it's finally here, in terms of funding.

6 There's 64,000 Americans killed by this last
7 year. Think about that number. More than all the men
8 and women killed in Vietnam one year in our country.
9 So it's ravaging the whole country.

10 I had a bill -- you know, a bill that was
11 passed two years ago that all of us up here voted for.
12 Was called the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery
13 Act. And we introduced a bill recently that was kind
14 of the next version of that. And one of the
15 provisions that we got in there was more -- 15 percent
16 of that new funding would go to tribal organizations
17 or, you know, that, as you mentioned, need a lot of
18 help and reach. And so that bill hasn't passed yet,
19 but I think it has decent prospects.

20 And then I'll mention: You may have seen
21 Lieutenant Governor Mallott and I went to Canada, went

22 to Ottawa, primarily to talk to the Canadian cabinet
23 officials on the transboundary mining issue. We
24 raised a number of other issues, including military
25 cooperation.

13 And our message was: Look, we're a
14 pro-resource development state. So this isn't about
15 being against mining, but it's about transparency and
16 it's also about you guys doing your job. I mean,
17 there's a mine on the other side of the border just
18 15 miles from Juneau that's been spewing toxic waste
19 for three decades. And our view is that's Canada's
20 job to clean that up.

24 MS. ROBERTS-HYSLOP: Thank you. Thank you
25 very much. My name is Julie Roberts-Hyslop. I'm from

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1 the Native village of Tanana, and I currently serve as
2 the Vice President for Tanana Chiefs Conference.

3 And I really appreciate all of you being here
4 today. And when I look at, you know, our theme,
5 challenges, I also think about opportunities, because
6 I think, you know, that's what we're -- most of us are
7 here for, is to look for how can we improve the
8 conditions of our communities and where we live?

9 But, you know, I just really want to thank
10 our Congressional Delegation for allowing the Native
11 village of Tanana to get a land transfer from the

12 Indian Health Service. I really appreciate that. And
13 we've been working on that for a long time, Senator
14 Murkowski and the rest of you. But it's going to be
15 an important part of our community to where we
16 develop -- that particular piece of land where an old
17 Indian Health Service hospital was located many, many
18 years ago for the Interior of Alaska and for a lot of
19 people of Alaska.

20 And so we're looking forward to planning for
21 that property. And one of the plans that we have is
22 to turn it into some kind of a treatment center,
23 because I know that in Alaska we really don't have
24 very many facilities, you know, to help our people
25 when they come, you know, wanting help.

1 But the other area that we really have
2 challenges with is our broadband, and how we need to
3 have that connectivity. If we're going to improve the
4 conditions of our people in our villages, we need to
5 have the same sort of access that people here in
6 Washington, D.C. have, you know, versus where I live
7 today.

8 I was thinking about my mother, who is 96
9 years old, and about four years ago she had one of
10 those pacemakers put in, you know. And so it was
11 really hard for her to, you know, have one of those
12 put into her, but then it was also difficult for her
13 to travel. And so we -- based on, you know, the type

14 of setup we have -- you know, they have these carts,
15 telecarts, to where her doctor, Dr. Schnellbacher in
16 Anchorage, her heart doctor, was able to talk to her
17 over the internet. They were seeing face-to-face each
18 other. And so he was able to read, you know, her
19 conditions, you know, with -- connected up to these
20 telecarts.

21 And so those are the things that we need to
22 continue to improve upon for our villages and our
23 village people. And so I'm just really hoping, you
24 know, that we could work really hard to make sure
25 that, you know, we're getting the fair dollars, you
1 know, to improve these conditions for our village
2 people.

3 But I just really appreciate, you know, all
4 the hard work that each you have -- you know, are
5 doing. And I especially, you know, honor our military
6 up there, because a lot of my family, including my
7 son, who -- is a veteran of the Marines. And so thank
8 you for -- you know, thank you for your services.
9 And, you know, I'm just proud, you know, to have two
10 of my members of my family being Marines, and my
11 brother's Navy and my father Army. So, you know, it's
12 just really an honor to be sitting here, you know, and
13 all the work that you guys do to make sure that, you
14 know, we're -- making sure that our people are being
15 taken care of.

11 **MR. MAYO:** Thank you for your presentations.
12 I really appreciate all the work that you do for us in
13 Congress, and, Secretary Zinke, for your statement on
14 sovereignty. I know that you have worked really well
15 with the tribes in your state, and they speak well of
16 you and the work that you did together.

17 The reason I wanted to make -- or encourage
18 you on something is that Congress has appropriated
19 funds for small tribes. It's called the Small and
20 Needy Tribes Fund. And it's administered by the BIA.
21 And Secretary, prior to your tenure, the BIA has been
22 lax in distributing those funds. And the idea behind
23 them is that the tribes, small tribes, such as about
24 every tribe in Alaska is, has such small allocations
25 of the BIA money so that a tribe may have 20, 30,

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1 \$40,000 total.

2 And so what Congress decided to do was to
3 create a line item that brings those tribes up to a
4 minimum of \$200,000 so that they can operate. And
5 what this does is it enables them to address their
6 local issues to fund operations at the tribal level,
7 the village level. It enables them to become a part
8 of the process.

9 And it's so enormously important for these
10 small tribes. And there's also a lot of them in
11 California, and they're scattered around the country.

12 And what we have experienced is, for whatever
13 reason, that money has not been distributed. And
14 we're concerned that we're coming up on the end of the
15 fiscal year this year, this fall, and we have yet to
16 see a distribution.

17 And what has happened in the past is in the
18 last week or two before the end of the fiscal year,
19 there's a little action, but it's not adequate. It's
20 not fulfilling the purposes that Congress intended.
21 And I'm hoping that I could encourage you, in your
22 capacity, to help us see a difference in how the BIA
23 addresses that. And from all that I hear, we could
24 expect that, but I certainly would encourage it.

25 And secondly, I'm real pleased that Alaska
1 has this high level of Air Force presence with this
2 new equipment. And, I mean, in the Interior, we're
3 benefiting from that.

4 I remember when the Air Force was expanding
5 these ranges that Tanana -- it's primarily in our
6 region. I'm in the Interior of Alaska. And it was
7 all in our region. And our trappers would come by,
8 and they'd say, "You know, we love the Air Force, but
9 when those jets sneak up behind us, they scare us out
10 of our parkas, you know."

11 And so we -- and, you know, we said to the
12 Air Force: "Look, can you kind of raise your floors a
13 little bit here and there?"

14

16 **SENATOR MURKOWSKI:** Will, I want to thank you
17 for bringing up this Small and Needy Tribes. In my
18 brief comments, I mentioned that so much of what has
19 to happen with our issues is education. And small but
20 needy tribes has been one of those line items that has
21 been challenged in multiple, multiple administrations.

22 And as you know, we've been successful in
23 these last couple of appropriations to not only keep
24 this Small and Needy Tribes account in play, but we've
25 actually been able to plus it up.

1 But if the monies don't get out there,
2 because of just the administration management side of
3 it, then we haven't accomplished what we all set out
4 to do.

5 So you reminding me the importance of it from
6 an appropriations perspective, and reminding the
7 Secretary from the perspective of, okay, now how we
8 administer these funds, this is how we make the
9 difference. So thank you for raising it.

10 **SECRETARY ZINKE:** And obviously this is the
11 first time I was aware of it, but I have written it
12 down. And of course it matters when the chairman says
13 something about it.

23 **GENERAL WILSBACH:** And I did want to come
24 back to -- Will, some of the comments you made about

25 the environment in the range space. And the military

1 in Alaska that train in the JPARC know what a great
2 deal we have there, because it's the only place in the
3 world where you can train to the level that we do.

4 And so we're very cognizant of the
5 environmental impacts that we could have on the range.
6 We know about the noise. We know about fishermen. We
7 know about trappers, hunters and so on and so forth.

8 And we appreciate that many of the people
9 that are on the ground inside of the range space,
10 their livelihood revolves around their ability to fish
11 and hunt and trap.

12 And so we don't want to ruin our opportunity
13 by overstaying our welcome or perhaps ruining or
14 having impact on those that really have their
15 livelihood in the environment that we're training in.

16 So I would like to tell you thank you for
17 working with us. And also we're actually expanding
18 the JPARC here in the fall. It's been an effort
19 that's been ongoing for about five years, and just
20 recently we had the period of public comment.

21 And the State of Alaska, the citizens of
22 Alaska, the tribes and the Alaska Natives all had an
23 opportunity to comment and ask questions about what
24 was going to be incorporated in the expansion of the
25 JPARC. And everybody came at the problem in a very

1 collaborative way. And I just want to publicly thank
2 all the groups that did that, because it's going to
3 allow us to improve the quality of our training in
4 Alaska.

17 **MS. BAHNKE:** Thank you, Julie, and thank you
18 to your Congressional Delegation for all that you do
19 to defend Small and Needy tribal funding and all other
20 funding that benefits our Alaska Native communities.

21 My comment is to Secretary Zinke. First of
22 all, I want to thank you for how you started out by
23 saying that you're a believer in sovereignty and that
24 you represent 573 tribes.

25 I'm Melanie Bahnke. I'm the President of
1 Kawerak, and I represented 20 of those 573 tribes.

2 I'm excited to hear that as you look at --
3 that you're looking at reorganizing Department of
4 Interior. It was under President Nixon that the
5 concept of self-governance was born. And I think,
6 after decades, we've been able to prove that it is a
7 successful model.

8 And I hope that as you look at rearranging
9 your house, that you consider areas where
10 self-governance can be expanded. I believe that we
11 could do a much more efficient and effective job in a
12 lot of the other programs within Department of

13 Interior, such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the
14 Park Service.

15 And I also encourage you to -- it's been
16 Department of Interior and DHSS that have been the
17 leader in compacting, but there are other -- your
18 colleagues, secretaries, where you could be
19 encouraging them to look at this as a model for
20 success.

21 When you look at where we've been given
22 opportunities, for example, the Alaska Native Claims
23 Settlement Act, within a few decades we rise to the
24 top in being the economic driving force in the state
25 of Alaska.

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1 With the healthcare system, we have got
2 entities that have received prestigious awards such as
3 the Baldrige award. And I do believe that this is one
4 major opportunity that's right in front of us, where
5 we're aligned as Alaska Native entities. And this
6 administration and I'm sure our Congressional
7 Delegation agrees with me on this issue. There are
8 other areas where we could be compacting and expanding
9 self-governance.

10 Thank you.

11 **SECRETARY ZINKE:**

13 Well, let me walk you through what we face in
14 Interior. Remember, imagine an entity that hasn't

15 been reorganized in 150 years. So let's say you have
16 a salmon and a trout in the same stream. Happens all
17 the time. Upstream you have a dam, downstream you
18 have irrigation, and if that stream goes past or near
19 a Forest Service holding.

20 So the salmon are managed by my friends over
21 at Commerce, NNMS. The trout is managed by me at Fish
22 and Wildlife Service. Upstream water temperature and
23 flows is generally the Army Corps of Engineers, unless
24 it's a dam that produces hydroelectricity. Then it's
25 the Bureau of Reclamation, depending on basin.

1 Downstream irrigation is Bureau of
2 Reclamation. A Forest Service holding. Surface is
3 Department of Agriculture, exercised through U.S.
4 Forest Service. Subsurface is BLM, exercised by me.

5 And when you get to a water compact, it's a
6 trifecta between the State, the tribe and BIA.

7 Same stream, whether it's replacing a bridge
8 or dealing with repairing a bank, you would likely
9 have multiple biological opinions independently
10 produced by agencies that have different missions and
11 different regions. And you wonder why we can't get a
12 permit. You wonder why we're mismanaging my opinion
13 being the steward of our greatest holdings, which is
14 our public lands.

15 And so looking at it, we think a better model
16 is to go to unified regions. Now, unified regions, if

17 I had the USGS take a look at: On the basis of
18 science, how would you realign the region boundaries?

19 Watersheds was a primary driver. And then
20 wildlife corridors. I signed a Secretary order
21 recently on wildlife corridors because wildlife
22 corridors are a critical component of a healthy
23 system.

24 So the USGS looked at, on the basis of
25 science, about 13 variables, again, water, watersheds,
1 wildlife corridors, fauna, ecosystems, and they looked
2 at boundaries of just science. How would you manage
3 our lands better?

4 And then I had the SESs, the senior executive
5 services. These are not political appointees.
6 They're careers. And they looked at it, and I could
7 have -- I didn't agree with every recommendation, but
8 I took every recommendation, because the careers
9 probably have forgotten more about Interior than I'll
10 ever know. And I wanted buy-in from our senior SESs.

11 So where we are is we're 13 regions, loosely,
12 I would say, based on the 13 variables, modified a
13 little of the SESs. And then when each of those new
14 unified regions -- and by "unified" what I mean is the
15 National Park Service is going to have the same
16 boundaries as the Fish and Wildlife, has the same
17 boundaries as the different bureaus within Interior.
18 At least we're going to have unified boundaries.

19 And then looking at three areas that we think
20 are critical, one is recreation, \$887 billion
21 industry. So we think recreation we can actually do
22 jointly as a recreation division made up of different
23 elements in that, we think NEPA and permitting. And
24 do those jointly.

25 Because decisions that are made in the
1 example, the trout and the salmon, all stakeholders
2 have to be present if we're going to make a timely
3 decision that makes sense. But when you have
4 different bureaus with different missions, and it's
5 sequentially, we're -- in some cases, we're 17 years
6 to make a decision on whether to put a bridge in. And
7 quite frankly, we can do a lot better.

8 And where BIA fits, as if that's going to be
9 up and -- and when I said in the beginning I believe
10 in sovereignty, is that the decision of whether BIA is
11 going to be incorporated into the reorganization is a
12 decision that's up to the nations.

13 And when I said we're equal partners and have
14 sovereignty, that's exactly what I said, is that I
15 think it's to the advantage of the nations to get
16 incorporated. So I think you're going to have a seat
17 at the table on critical decisions. But that decision
18 whether you're incorporated or not, whether you want
19 it the same structure you've had since 1849, that's
20 your decision.

21 So we're beginning consultations. I think
22 we've done 3,000 consultations last year in Alaska
23 alone. But as we go forward and look at the maps, the
24 nations are going to have to determine whether it's in
25 their best interest to be part of the unified regions.

1 So that's where we are in the reorganization.

2 But certainly I think you've got to -- you know, I'm a

3 big public lands guy. I think Roosevelt had it right.

4 But he had the courage about a hundred years ago to

5 take this nation on a course of public lands. And I
6 think now's the time we're -- had the same courage to
7 look out the next hundred years.

8 What do we know is going to take place? We
9 know there's going to be more people going through our
10 national parks, more pressure on hunting and fishing
11 opportunities, and how do we manage our public
12 holdings better? And now's the time.

13 And if you look at the other side of
14 Interior, is that 16 percent of Interior today is
15 retirement age. In five years, 40 percent of Interior
16 is retirement age. Forty percent.

17 So you have a president that has tasked the
18 secretaries to look at reorganization. You have a
19 Secretary that looks at the opportunity to reorganize.
20 And then you have a workforce that is really senior.
21 So we don't have to RIF anybody.

22 But I do think overall the reorganization

23 will push more assets where they should be in the
24 front line. We're pretty heavy on headquarters, but
25 we're too short in the field.

1 So it's an opportunity to reconfigure what we
2 should look like in the next hundred years, so we
3 can -- we can manage our holdings and so we can give
4 local communities in Alaska a voice.

5 A complaint over and over and over again is
6 that you know what? If you don't know the difference
7 between the Potomac and the Yukon, maybe the Potomac's
8 not the right place to make those management decisions
9 that affect the Yukon so much.

10 So by reorganizing and giving more power to
11 the states and the front line, and more say to the
12 people that are affected by these decisions, I think
13 in the long term, and probably even the short term, we
14 will see a better reorganization and a better model
15 that instills trust, as I'm always concerned that
16 people don't trust the government.

17 And we have really good people, but trust
18 comes with transparency and the rightful feeling and
19 the rightful and meaningful message that your voice
20 counts. If you jump up and down, and every time your
21 voice doesn't -- isn't heard, and you see the same
22 thing year after year after year, that nothing's going
23 to get done, that our veterans aren't being taken care
24 of, the heavy-handedness of the federal government, a

25 democracy demands that we're all participants, and our
1 voice is heard. So I look forward to our discussions.

10 *MS. THOMPSON:* Yes. Briefly, I respect
11 those -- the tenacity of all those that spoke before
12 me to keep fighting for what you believe in. I'm one
13 of them. I'm President of Alexander Creek,
14 Incorporated. We were certified as a village. Things
15 happened, mistakes were made. We went through a Ninth
16 Circuit Court. The administrative law judge directed
17 the Secretary of Interior at the time to fix the
18 mistake.

19 It was never fixed. He wrote us into ANILCA
20 as a group. When I took over presidency, I was 27
21 years old. I'm 59 years old now. And with the help
22 of Don Young, we've got this far, he's been fighting
23 hard for 20 years for us. And I appreciate him and
24 his staff and their hard work for this -- for our
25 people.

1 Senator Murkowski, I started with her father
2 before her, and she has taken the steps to help us.
3 And we're still fighting this battle. My father, who
4 was past president, is 91 years old. Most of our
5 elders are passed away now, and we're still fighting.

6 We'd like your help and support on this. And
7 I appreciate all those who have helped us in the past.

8 The other thing I wanted to speak with --

9 briefly, is I also represent the Cook Inlet villages
10 and tribes. As you know, Anchorage, Wasilla, Kenai
11 area all take our fish. And the tribes are meeting to
12 start the -- a commission just like the Yukon
13 Kuskokwim health commission -- fish commission to
14 address these issues and look forward to working with
15 you and -- on these issues in the future.

21

MR. MULVANEY:

8 I know there's a lot of stuff that we're
9 doing. We can talk a little bit about the recent
10 thing that we passed with the Omni.

11 I talked to Dan's staff about this. I know
12 that Dan voted against it. But if you were going to
13 vote against it, the right reason to vote against it
14 was the process by which we went through it. I think
15 everybody feels the frustration that the process is
16 broken, that the ordinary rules that we follow, the
17 regular order is broken and that there are some
18 tremendous process violations in this bill.

19 That being said, there's a lot of good stuff
20 for Alaska, there's a lot of good stuff for the
21 military bases, a lot of good stuff for the public
22 lands. Again, when you come from a state where so
23 much of your land is owned by the federal government,
24 it presents a challenge that is unique to you, in
25 terms of your tax base, in terms of getting

1 infrastructure funded, in terms of the way you run
2 your state. Again, something that is unique to you
3 and a few other western states. Oh before I stop, I'm supposed
14 to say this. We evidently stole somebody from Senator
15 Murkowski's office who's here. Jacob Wood works for
16 me, and Jacob is in the back and tells me that he is
17 responsible for teaching several hundred thousand
18 Alaskans how to spell the name Murkowski. So Jacob's
19 in the back. So he works for the Office of Management
20 and Budget now.

3 **MS. KITKA:** Well, I guess what we'd like to
4 know is some of your priorities at OMB, what to be
5 looking for for this next year and the year coming up
6 on that.

7 What we're trying to do in Alaska is address
8 some really critical urgent needs, both the national
9 security and investing in the future of the state, and
10 national security interests investment as well as
11 infrastructure, energy, and so forth on that.

12 And so we needed to get a sense from OMB of
13 how to convey the information that we think is vitally
14 important so that people in OMB and other areas of the
15 administration can understand and get behind some of
16 these things.

17 **MR. MULVANEY:** Sure. And one of our base
18 priorities was ANWR, and your delegation did a
19 tremendous job on that. It's one of the great unsung

20 successes I think of the last Congress. It got
21 wrapped up in the tax bill. The tax bill gets all the
22 attention, and rightly so, because the tax bill was
23 monumental. But to also have that at the same time
24 was, I thought, a tremendous success.

25 I'll do the M first, the Office of Management
1 and Budget actually does as much on management as we

2 do on budget. We're the -- sort of the consulting
3 firm for the President. We were created about a
4 hundred years ago when presidents were upset that
5 cabinet secretaries didn't listen to them very much
6 and a President could hire or fire the Secretary of
7 Interior, but really couldn't tell him or her what to
8 do.

9 So they complained enough to Congress to
10 create the -- then the bureau of the budget, now the
11 Office of Management and Budget to sort of sit on top
12 of the agencies to make sure they're doing what the
13 President wants.

14 So our priorities at OMB are whatever the
15 President's are. And right now under management, it
16 is the reorganization that you heard Ryan talk about.

17 The government is broken. You all see it.
18 The 17 years to build a bridge, unfortunately that's
19 not the exception. You may have seen the President on
20 TV with a long list of approvals that is necessary.
21 We're looking at ten years now on average to build a

22 road.

23 He and I talk about money all the time. It's
24 my job, right? He says, "Mick, we need more money for
25 infrastructure, more money for infrastructure."

1 I said: Mr. President, you have to look at
2 infrastructure, in terms of a pipeline, and you put
3 money into one end of the pipeline, and a road comes
4 out at the back end of the pipeline. And right now
5 that pipeline is ten years long. And you could throw
6 as much money as you want to on the front end of the
7 pipeline, and it's not going to build a single foot of
8 asphalt during your two years -- your two terms of
9 your presidency. You have to shorten the pipeline in
10 order to actually put stuff on the ground, which is
11 what people care about.

12 So the reorganization that Ryan talked about
13 is absolutely critical to our larger infrastructure
14 initiatives. We're hopeful that we could make more
15 progress on infrastructure this year. I think it's
16 probably unlikely that we'll be able to do that.

17 But if there's anything we can do, in terms
18 of restructuring the government and minimizing the
19 regulatory burden, that would be a huge success for
20 us.

21 Overall, on the spending, I think you saw our
22 priorities in the Omni. When the President stood up
23 and said, "Look, I don't like the bill, but I'm going

24 to sign it," the reason he signed was quite simple.
25 We got enough money for the opioids to help make a
1 difference. We got enough money for the military to
2 defend the nation. But these are the priorities for
3 the President and for the legislature.

4 So we're cautiously optimistic that there's
5 some really, really good stuff in that bill. I got
6 the list here. I could go over it. But you all know
7 more about it than I do.

8 The Polar Icebreaker I think means more to
9 you than it does to the folks in South Carolina, but
10 that's okay. So I think we've had a real -- very
11 successful first 14 months in office getting our
12 priorities taken care of, in large part because of the
13 work in the House and the Senate.

14 So things may slow down a little bit, which
15 is not unusual, by the way, for those of you who
16 follow politics. Things usually slow down in the
17 second year of a Congress because so many folks are
18 running for reelection. That's not unusual. But we
19 thought the first 14 months went really, really well.
20 We look forward to building on that if we can.

21 MS. KITKA: Before I open it up for
22 questions, one of the efficiency and cost savings
23 models that we have been involved in for quite a time
24 is compacting, and that has been a way to squeeze a
25 lot of money out of the layers of government as it

1 gets down.

2 And maybe Melanie could tell you a little bit
3 about Kawerak as one of our prime examples of
4 compacting and what a difference that model has made.

5 **MS. BAHNKE:** Thanks, Julie.

6 Mr. Mulvaney, right before you walked in, I
7 was making a recommendation to Secretary Zinke as you
8 look at restructuring and reorganizing. I guess an
9 analogy to me would be the difference between just
10 moving furniture around and doing a major remodel of
11 your house. I'm in the middle of remodeling
14 my house. Compacting -- the idea of self-governance
15 was started as a pilot project decades ago under the
16 Nixon Administration, and it's proven to be one of the
17 more effective models. If you're looking to build on
18 success, that's definitely a model to take a look at,
19 where you're providing tribes and tribal organizations
20 with the resources to perform what the government was
21 doing.

22 And we've succeeded. We're building roads.
23 It doesn't take us 17 years to build roads in our
24 region. We have tribal transportation funding. From
25 concept, to design, to construction, it's averaging us
1 four years. So I do believe that's a model
4 that is successful. I don't think it's a partisan
5 issue. I think it's something that you would find

6 support from our Congressional Delegation, our tribes.

7 And like I said, this was begun under a
8 republican administration, so expanding
9 self-governance and compacting opportunities is
10 something that I hope that you would support.

11 MR. MULVANEY: I would be happy to take a
12 look. I'm not familiar with it. I just asked Don if
13 he knew about it, and obviously he does. So look
14 forward to talking to him about that

15 **SENATOR SULLIVAN:** Julie, can I -- I'm just
16 going to make one point to the director, and it's a
17 very short one. But your work, you and the entire
18 administration on the permitting reform -- we're
19 trying to move things in Congress, but what you've
20 done in the executive branch -- and Senator Murkowski
21 and I were just talking yesterday about the executive
22 order that went out just last week on one single
23 agency in charge of permitting, two-year time limit.

24 I mean, this is -- Director Mulvaney is
25 driving this. And I will tell you it's really
1 important for the country, so thank you, thank you,
2 thank you.

3 It is so important for our state, because
4 often we are ground zero for the groups that don't
5 like to have you build things, who come into our
6 state, who sue agencies who try to stop things. Ryan
7 Zinke just made a great decision on a road called the
8

9 King Cove Road. You may have seen there was an op ed
10 in the Wall Street Journal just yesterday --

11 **MR. MULVANEY:** Great example.

12 **SENATOR SULLIVAN:** -- from an Alaskan that
13 was a phenomenal read, if you haven't read it. But
14 what you're doing on this matters to our state so
15 much. And keep it up. We want to support you. We
16 want to try to get a lot of what you're doing from
17 executive orders into legislation, so whoever the next
18 administration is we can't go back to this.

19 You know, it took 20 years to permit a mine,
20 gold mine in Alaska. It took -- you know, talk to
21 Secretary Chao about a road that she just helped
22 permit. Sterling Highway, 30 years, maybe, on
23 permitting. So please keep it up.

24 We are kind of ground zero for all these
25 delays, and your work on this is enormously important
165 to our economy.
1

2 **MR. MULVANEY:** That's a great point. Keep in
3 mind if there's stuff that you see that the
4 administration is doing that you like, then you should
5 immediately get involved with passing legislation that
6 does the same thing, because there are certain things
7 that presidents can do that the next president can
8 undo. So if you perceive this as being progress, we
9 need to enshrine that in law. Otherwise, it's likely
10 to get worse at some point in the future.

11 That's why I appreciate y'all doing all these
12 CRAs that you're doing. I wear another hat, by the
13 way. I'm also running the Consumer Financial
14 Protection Bureau, which, by the way, reminds me.

15 We talked about sovereignty before. I have
16 dismissed one lawsuit since I've been there, and it
17 involved tribal entities. It was one of the -- one of
18 the issues can I took a look at -- the merits of the
19 case are not important, but what was important was
20 that we're taking an attitude that we respect the
21 sovereignty, and we're going to be limited when we get
22 involved in getting involved in the business that the
23 tribes undertake. So we do respect that and look
24 forward to building on that as well.

25 MS. KITKA: I know people have asked me to
1 invite you to come up to Alaska the spring or
2 summertime, or if there's --

3 MR. MULVANEY: Not in the winter? Is that
4 not --

5 MS. KITKA: Well, winter, too, but --

6 MR. MULVANEY: It's been so miserable here
7 this year, so...

8 MS. KITKA: But we'd like you to come during
9 one of the little slower periods back here in D.C. on
10 that, if your schedule allows.

11 MR. MULVANEY: That's the difference between
12 my job and the members of the legislature. I don't

13 have a slow time.

15 MR. MULVANEY: I have two full-time jobs,
16 which has been a lot of fun.

17 But, no, I appreciate that. And both
18 senators especially have -- Don has had a standing
19 invitation for years, but the senators both mentioned
20 that during my confirmation process. And I need to
21 get up there. We're just looking for an excuse to go.

22 MS. KITKA: Well, obviously we would like to
23 showcase some of the really good things going on and
24 help you put forward on your change agenda on that,
25 and especially our public-private partnerships.

1 MR. MULVANEY: Yeah.

2 MS. KITKA: We're really believers on that,
3 and the pay for success for motivating people to
4 accomplish the things. So like I said, you're welcome
5 to come up, and we'll show you some of the exciting
6 things going on.

11 MS. BURETTA: Hi. Sheri Burette. I'm the
12 Chairman of the Board for Chugach Alaska Corporation.
13 Thank you for being here, Director Mulvaney. Your
14 comment about Congressman Young and his stick on the
15 floor with the 8(a) program

If he wasn't able to spend much

21 time educating you on the benefits of the program, it
22 has been the missing link of the settlement act. And
23 as you know, the federal government in the Native

24 Claims Settlement Act received a tremendous amount of
25 assets and land in Alaska.

1 And the partnership between the Alaska Native
2 corporations through government contracting has been
3 enormous in our ability to build capacity and
4 infrastructure to be able to be profitable and to give
5 back to our communities.

6 So I am very happy to know that that
7 education and that awareness is with somebody at your
8 position, because it's important for us to spread the
9 word and have that relationship. Going forward, these
10 people that have presented today have shown that we
11 have to work together. We're a small community in
12 Alaska, and our ability to be able to work with the
13 military and to build capacity and look out for our
14 people and community is dependent on these types of
15 programs that build this capacity as we transition and
16 work with our subsistence economy.

17 So thank you for recognizing that as an
18 important piece of who we are.

19 **MR. MULVANEY:** Thank you for that. It's a
20 great example of what Congress spends most of its time
21 on. You know, the stuff that makes the news, people
22 think that's all that we do, the big picture stuff.
23 And that's -- nothing could be further from the truth.

24 ANC is something that would never make the

25 national news, but it's important to you, and for that
1 reason it's important to your delegation. And those
2 types of small things come up every single day. We
3 had it in South Carolina, and you folks have it in
4 Alaska.

5 So it's nice to have folks who actually
6 understand those smaller issues, because while they're
7 not -- while they're small nationally, they're not
8 small to you, which I learned the hard way with the
9 Alaska Native corporations with Congressman Young.

22 MS. KORTHUIS: Director Mulvaney, my name is
23 Vivian Korthuis. I work as the CEO for the AVCP
24 association, our regional -- AVCP. Sorry.

25 About a month ago, I had an all-staff meeting
1 in Bethel, and we serve the YK Delta, and we have 56
2 tribes in 48 villages. I asked the staff in their
3 staff meeting if they would think back 30, 40 years in
4 our region and come up with a list of things that
5 worked in our region that benefited the rural -- the
6 rest of rural -- the rural Alaska. And in about ten
7 minutes, staff listed 33 things.

9 MS. KORTHUIS: They included D-have (ph),
10 health aides, VPSOs, all these unique programs that
11 are the norm now for delivery of services to our
12 villages in rural Alaska.

13 And one of the things that I talked to them
14 about was -- these are staff people. I have 400 staff
15 throughout the YK Delta.

16 So one of the things I told them was that
17 before subregional clinics, someone had to sit down
18 and figure it out. Someone had to sit down and figure
19 out that the level of care between the health aides in
20 the clinics in the villages, the subregion clinics,
21 the hospital in Bethel and on to referrals outside of
22 Bethel to Anchorage, that tiered model had to be
23 defined.

24 And the process, it didn't take -- it took
25 several years to do that. And those 33 examples that
1 my staff came up with, we go through the same process
2 in designing things that really address the challenges
3 in our villages.

4 And we're going through that right now, for
5 example, with public safety. You know, what are the
6 services that belong in the village, what can we
7 subregionalize, those things that can be provided out
8 in the regional hub and then those things that we rely
9 on from the State or those things that can come out of
10 Anchorage.

11 So I wanted to stress to you: I know that a
12 lot of the services that are provided in rural Alaska
13 manifest not in money, but in the things that people
14 do to help others.

15 So I just wanted to point out that these
16 things have to be thought of, these things have to be
17 tried out, these things have to be kind of honed in to
18 where it works in our villages.

19 And I really appreciate the fact that you're
20 here listening. A lot of times we don't think of the
21 money part of things when we -- we know that -- for
22 example, last week, in one of our villages, the
23 community hub burnt down. In that village of 700
24 people, that's where they gather.

25 It would be like saying in Anchorage,
1 Dena'ina Center burnt down, or here in Washington,
2 D.C., the convention center burnt down.

3 In that particular village, there is no VPSO,
4 and there is no tribal police. And in that particular
5 village, there are three tribes that actually exist in
6 that village.

7 So what I'm trying to share with you is the
8 fact that we go through a process of working and
9 designing and utilizing the best practices in these
10 models that we come up with that, that my staff came
11 up with as an example of the last 40 years of trying
12 to figure out what works in our villages.

13 And many, many times it's not the money that
14 comes first to our minds. But we do need the
15 appropriate funding so that these models that work in
16 our villages can last forever, in terms of providing

17 either healthcare or the best practice in whatever
18 industry that we're talking about. So I do thank you
19 for coming and listening to us today.

20 MR. MULVANEY: Thank you for that. I
21 appreciate it. Thank you very much for having me.

7 MR. RAZO: ...U.S. Attorney's Office and the
8 FBI, and the Drug Enforcement Administration to see if
9 there's some way that law enforcement can bridge the
10 gap in dealing with the Alaska Native people.

11 And the reason for that is because when
12 folks, non-Native folks especially, who work in
13 government, go into the village and want to gather
14 evidence and find out what happened at the crime --
15 I'm a criminal lawyer myself -- they don't have any
16 level of trust or understanding about the people that
17 they're dealing with.

18 And they have no partnerships in the
19 communities, they have no resources that they can draw
20 on when they're out there, and it's incredibly
21 expensive to get out to a lot of locations in Alaska.

22 And so consequently, with the state economy
23 being the way it is, in a very steep recession for a
24 long time, the State's public safety obligation has
25 not been met.

1 And so we don't have State Troopers in the
2 villages anymore. It's hard to get out to even fly to
3 a crime scene. In the event of something as hideous

4 as a homicide, it can be, you know, days before
5 anybody comes out to investigate, with someone's loved
6 one, you know, laying wherever the event happened.
7 And that's not unusual. It's just not unusual right
8 now.

9 So we're in a crisis up there for public
10 safety, and people are mad about it. They're really,
11 really mad about it.

12 So from the Department of Justice side, I
13 would really urge you guys, in terms of working with
14 Alaska, to realize that just because, you know, we
15 have the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, that
16 doesn't mean we don't have tribal people that are
17 suffering in Alaska.

18 And just because we're a Public Law 280 state
19 doesn't mean that we need federal resources to augment
20 the type of public safety that we have.

21 So -- and I know you're well aware of this.
22 It's no secret. But we just cannot continue as a
23 state being the number one leader in domestic
24 violence, the number one leader in sexual assault; the
25 most dangerous state in the nation, is the latest
1 report.

2 So that situation is completely untenable.
3 And to the extent that you can recommend to your other
4 federal partners in the Department of Justice that **our**

5 people want to do something about that, we know how to

6 take care of ourselves. And, you know, if the federal

7 government can't figure out how to spend the little

8 money that comes up to Alaska in a meaningful way,

9 then please consider compacting with us so that we can

10 use that money and put it to a use that will be a good

11 use, that will serve much more effectively than the

12 way we're doing it right now.

13 And, you know, it's so frustrating to have

14 the State responsibility for law enforcement all lie

15 at the State level, and then the State not do its job.

16 So anything you can do to help out in that situation

17 will be greatly appreciated.

18 **MR. TOULOU:** And I appreciate that. We've

19 been working more with the State than we ever have

20 before, recognizing how unique Alaska is.

21 I think you talked about the opioid issues.

22 I mean, I know the violent crime and drug issues are

23 worse in Alaska than, frankly, anywhere else. But it

24 is unique, in that most of the villages you say

25 they're hard to get to for law enforcement.

1 There's, you know, a distinct pipeline with

2 drugs in there, too, that would seem like something

3 that we could focus on in a way that maybe we don't in

4 other places. So I will take back what you said. But

5 keep -- there are people thinking about these issues.

8 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Mike Williams with the Akiak

9 Native community, a small village in Western Alaska.
10 We have been putting our young people -- burying them
11 lately, you know, with the issue of alcohol, and
12 there's scores of people dying in our villages as we
13 speak.

14 And following up with Greg's statement that
15 we're number one in all areas, and with a tribal law
16 and order commission that went out before, confirms
17 that.

18 In regards to the amount of deaths that are
19 occurring, Native Village of Napaskiak issued a crisis
20 resolution just recently and urged the Governor to
21 create the emergency order to declare disaster.

22 And that's how far we are going right now,
23 with the alcohol sales in Bethel that -- without any
24 public safety in place being put there. And the main
25 reason why we closed them in early '70s is because the
1 amount of deaths that we have seen. And it's -- in
2 one year, we lost quite a few people.

3 And Native Village of Napaskiak issued a
4 resolution to urge the Governor to declare disaster.
5 And also the Native Village of Marshall also is crying
6 out. And many of our communities are crying out for
7 police protection, public safety, and a safety plan in
8 some way to prevent these deaths from occurring.

9 So disaster after disaster is happening in
10 our area. So I would urge you to take a look at

11 Western Alaska, particularly how one second-class city
12 is affecting the whole region.

13 So there has been efforts to get a task force
14 to have a talking thing to address this, but, you
15 know, we're still in that process. But I think it is
16 something to take a look into.

17 At one point the federal marshals, when they
18 did a temporary action, really helped out a lot in
19 some of the villages. Something like half of the
20 villages don't even have police protection anymore.
21 So it's a lot of communities without police
22 protection.

23 So the State is failing its obligation, and
24 so is the federal government. So we need help. And
25 we don't know -- I don't know where to go, but to ask
1 for help. That's all I can do.

2 **MR. TOULOU:** Yeah, thank you for that. One
3 of the things we have going for us this year is there
4 was a -- the budget was quite a bit better than it has
5 been for the department in Indian Country,
6 particularly around victim services.

7 And we're on a quick timeline on figuring out
8 how to get that money out. We'll be doing a series of
9 phone consultations within probably the next 30 days.
10 We'll make sure that they're noticed to everybody, and
11 we'll reach out to AFN separately. But I'm hopeful
12 that some of that -- a good chunk of that funding can

13 go to Alaska to help with victim services. It's
14 limited in what we can do.

15 The other thing we can do is what you
16 mentioned, which is -- and we all do task forces. And
17 I'm sure we have all done task forces to death, but
18 Alaska is so different than the Lower 48 and the way
19 we provide law enforcement services to Indian
20 communities. I think it's really useful.

21 I would be very interested in participating
22 and having my office participate in anything we can do
23 to help. We're going to work through our U.S.
24 Attorney there on the ground. They know the situation
25 better than we do. But there may be some things we
1 can bring to that conversation.

2 The other thing I would say is some of our
3 leadership intends to go to Alaska over the spring and
4 the summer, particularly those in the grant area,
5 which I think is essential for them to see how things
6 work. They may know what -- how an Indian tribe
7 functions in the Lower 48. It's completely different
8 in Alaska. And they need to get up there and see
9 that, and that's something we're going to help make
10 happen.

11 **MR. WILLIAMS:** We appreciate the Violence
12 Against Women Act, folks with the Native Women's
13 Coalition and the Alaska Native Coalition coming in
14 now to help with some of that -- those issues that we

15 are dealing with at the ground. So we just appreciate
16 the work now underway with the strong hearts that
17 advocate it to begin those discussions and healing
18 process to take place in our communities.

20 **MR. TOULOU:** Thank you.

3 **MS. ANDERSON:**

25 So I want to preface my comments today by

1 dedicating what I'm about to say to one of our former
2 presidents that passed away in February, shortly
3 before his birthday. And that's Roy Ewan.

4 Roy Ewan would normally travel with us when
5 we come down to Washington, D.C., because we have got
6 some unfinished business. It's not a road project
7 that takes 17 years. It's a matter of survival that
8 affects every one of you that is Alaska Native in this
9 room. And it's an unresolved issue of 47 years. So I
10 know that he's with us today, and I think my
11 leadership that traveled with me, and those that work
12 with us and -- just appreciate the support in the
13 room.

14 So I'm pleased to have the opportunity to
15 speak about some of the risks and threats we face in
16 our region, the Ahtna region, and the need for
17 capacity building and infrastructure investments.

18 Thank you to AFN and our co-hosts for
19 inviting this sharing of thoughts which will set us on

20 a positive path while balancing competing interests.

21 Ahtna is one of the largest inholders of
22 private property of public lands in the United States.
23 Our lands surround North America's tallest peak, Mount
24 Denali -- I hope it stays Mount Denali -- and includes
25 600,000 acres in America's largest national park and
1 preserve, the Wrangell-St. Elias.

2 Our lands are of great importance to the
3 Ahtna people, who have lived there -- or here for a
4 time immemorial. We depend on hunting, fishing and
5 other resources to sustain our culture and our way of
6 life.

7 Our elders made our ANCSA land selections
8 based on our traditional hunting and fishing patterns.
9 Thanks to their vision and care for our lands and wise
10 resource management, we are living proof resilience is
11 born from sound resource management and knowing when
12 to take action.

13 Alaska became the 49th state in 1959. That's
14 less than 60 years of statehood history. There was
15 most definitely a colonial mindset in those early
16 years. Today, Alaska's resources and strategic
17 position are valued with regard to national security
18 as we heard this morning.

19 One of the first necessities of development
20 in the newly formed state were the building of roads
21 and transportation infrastructure. Ahtna is unique.

22 We are the only ANCSA region whose villages are all
23 road accessible. That accessibility may cause one to
24 think that we are blessed with great opportunities.
25 At times that's proven to be true, but more often than
1 not, that same accessibility also means increased
2 hunting pressures and exposure to other negative
3 impacts.

4 We feel that hunting pressure when it comes
5 to increased competition for our traditional food
6 sources. Since the passage of land claims, the Ahtna
7 people must attend board of game meetings, federal
8 subsistence board meetings, and even file litigation
9 to protect our ability to hunt our traditional foods.
10 We also compete with thousands of hunters who are
11 licensed to hunt in our game units, and many of those
12 hunters show no respect for our private lands.

13 I want to define the type of hunting I'm
14 talking about. Ahtna people, in fact, all Native
15 cultures, none of us are sports hunters when it comes
16 to putting food on the table. It was never our
17 historical practice to go out and shoot the biggest
18 moose or caribou. Food security to us is not a sport.

19 Unfortunately, we are forced to be sports
20 hunters under current state regs that dictate horn
21 size and dimensions. Traditional foods are a core
22 part of our culture. To be denied access to our
23 traditional foods, because state quotas are met, is an

24 attack on our cultural identity.

25 I am not being overdramatic when I say our

1 culture is being regulated out of existence. Congress

2 and the State of Alaska promised our leaders during

3 the land claims negotiations that our traditional

4 hunting and fishing rights would be taken care of.

5 To this day, we continue to seek a long-term

6 solution for our food security. We believe Congress

7 intended for Alaska Natives to manage and hunt

8 wildlife on our settlement lands. We do not believe

9 Congress intended for us to be wards of the State with

10 respect to our lands and for us to attend Board of

11 Game and Board of Fish meetings in order to ensure

12 that we have food security.

13 Though our elders have said so for decades,

14 Alaska Native traditional knowledge is now considered

15 quantifiable. We know how to balance harvesting, and

16 we know when to stop hunting or fishing in order for

17 both to continue to thrive.

18 The Ahtna people, like every Native group in

19 this room, continue to work cooperatively for

20 resolutions that allow us to put our traditional foods

21 on the table and in the freezer. The Ahtna

22 cooperative management demonstration project, which

23 was signed in 2016 -- remember it's 2018 -- is a

24 secretarial order requiring Interior Department

25 agencies to include Ahtna tribes in the local

1 management of federal lands and resources where
2 possible.

3 The agreement was signed between the
4 Department of the Interior and the Ahtna Intertribal
5 Resource Commission. AITRC was formed to be a
6 coordinating body for subsistence resources in the
7 Ahtna traditional use area, and membership includes
8 the local tribes as well as Ahtna, Incorporated and
9 Chitina Native Corporation, because we are the
10 landowners.

11 Through the agreements, AITRC was given
12 authority to cooperatively manage the subsistence
13 moose and caribou hunt on federal land for tribal
14 members, and a local advisory committee was supposed
15 to be formed to provide input on federal wildlife
16 management decisions.

17 But since the signing, funding has been in
18 jeopardy, and the program has not advanced on the
19 government side as quickly as it should.

20 The Ahtna people are no strangers to working
21 together and being united when faced with challenges
22 or threats. For any culture, these are survival
23 tactics.

24 Over the years, we found a way to work
25 respectfully with our federal and state partners. If

1 he was here, I would remind the Secretary that he has
2 the power and authority to fulfill a promise to Alaska
3 Natives, and that is allowing us to provide our food
4 security by authorizing us to manage and hunt wildlife
5 on our lands.

6 Our resources and assets present both
7 opportunity and risk that have attracted stakeholders
8 in matters of not only energy and transportation, but
9 also of national security. Our traditional lands are
10 rich in resources and accessible with over 3,500 miles
11 of roads and trails.

12 Ahtna owns some of the most pristine lands in
13 the world, and we have proven that landowners and
14 industry can coexist and that development can occur
15 safely for the economic benefit of all Alaskans.

16 Knowledge of our region's lands have
17 benefited the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System operations,
18 or TAPS as it's known. For over 40 years, the
19 pipeline has been a part of our region with the
20 right-of-way crossing 55 miles of Ahtna lands and four
21 Ahtna villages.

22 Ahtna hosts 197 miles of TAPS within our
23 traditional lands as it crosses the Klutina, Gulkana,
24 Tonsina and Tazlina Rivers which flow into the
25 salmon-rich Copper River.

1 TAPS has transported approximately
2 17 billion barrels of oil through our lands in a safe

3 and environmentally sound manner. One of the reasons
4 Ahtna agreed to this pipeline crossing our lands and
5 rivers was because we were told our subsistence needs
6 would be provided for by the State of Alaska. That
7 has not happened yet.

8 To add insult to injury, Ahtna never received
9 one cent for any of the oil that passed through our
10 lands. We have competed and won pipeline contracts,
11 and our shareholders have had pipeline-related jobs
12 through the years. But the owners of the pipeline
13 have not paid us any royalty, nor one penny for the
14 17 billion barrels of oil that flow over our lands.

15 Ahtna has been one of Alyeska's most
16 important partners. The long-term health and safe
17 operation of TAPS is critical for the U.S. economy and
18 for all Alaskans, but production is significantly down
19 in the state.

20 The federal government owns over 60 percent
21 of Alaska's 365 million acres. Ahtna's experience has
22 proven -- Ahtna's experience with Alyeska has proven
23 that a major world-class pipeline can safely transport
24 oil through our lands. TAPS needs more oil,

25 particularly from federal lands, to keep it running
1 for the next 40 years and beyond.

2 The Ahtna region is in a strategic location
3 for future growth and economic development. We
4 support energy and infrastructure projects such as the

5 AKLNG line and the proposed Road Belt electrical
6 transmission line or intertie. Not only would these
7 projects help support our nation's infrastructure, but
8 they could provide much needed economical energy
9 solutions for our regions in Alaska.

10 Ahtna is the largest private landowner on the
11 proposed AKLNG pipeline route with over 33 miles of
12 our lands in the pipeline route. We are working with
13 the Governor and his staff as well as Alaska Gasline
14 Development Corporation to ensure the best possible
15 position for Ahtna and our shareholders on the export
16 of Alaska natural gas to international markets.

17 The Road Belt electrical transmission line is
18 a major project that, if built, would create a
19 statewide grid that could provide the reliability of
20 Interior Alaska's power supply and more efficient use
21 of existing power plants.

22 Currently, the power plants rely on diesel
23 fuel generators in the winter months, which drives up
24 the prices for local customers. The proposed intertie
25 would enable greater use of electricity generated by
1 renewable resources like wind and hydro.

2 The additional capacity could improve
3 reliability and provide backup power during outages
4 that we currently lack. Imagine being without power
5 in the dead of winter. It happens.

6 This past winter, many of our communities

7 were without power sometimes for a week at a time.
8 Thank goodness we weren't experiencing a 40-below snap
9 when the power was out. When this power outage
10 occurred, we actually had gone through a snap, and it
11 fortunately had just warmed up when the power went
12 out.

13 This proposed intertie would greatly lessen
14 the severity of these outages. It would also help to
15 meet the military's growing need for more electrical
16 power.

17 Our communities face some of the highest
18 energy costs in the nation. Not ones to wait to be
19 rescued from high-energy costs, Ahtna recently
20 explored natural gas prospects on state lease land.

21 I want to say thank you to Senator Sullivan,
22 because if he didn't help push that project along, we
23 would probably still be going through the application
24 process. So thank you.

25 The exploration was done under a state
1 exploration tax-incentive program. We did not find
2 the commercial results we had hoped for with the first
3 successfully drilled exploratory gas well in the
4 region, but we did learn a lot about other prospects
5 on Ahtna-owned lands, and we will continue to seek
6 investors for further resource development.

7 Alaska entered the 20th century with an
8 overland transportation network made up primarily of

9 trails and sled roads unsuitable for travel by
10 vehicles. These 5,000 trails were our people's
11 economic means early on, and over time would become
12 the transportation trails and roads of outsiders and
13 goods.

14 Our ancestors created an extensive network of
15 hundreds of trails connecting salmon fishing camps
16 with winter settlements, upland hunting territories
17 and lakeside spring camps. The modern highways that
18 now cross our homeland follow routes that were
19 pioneered by our people.

20 Within 50 years, more than 3,000 miles of
21 roads were constructed in Alaska, driven by the rich
22 resource potential and strategic military importance
23 of our state. The road system that runs through the
24 Ahtna region is critical to connecting the commercial
25 hubs of Anchorage, Fairbanks and Valdez. All western
1 goods and foods must be trucked into our region, and
2 when roads become impassable, the store shelves
3 quickly become bare.

4 Our highways and byways are ill-equipped for
5 major disasters and emergency situations, considering
6 our region is located in some of the most extreme
7 weather patterns. As an Interior hub and crossroads
8 of the National Highway System routes, the economy of
9 our region is affected by the condition of these
10 highways.

11 During the past decade, improvements have
12 been made to improve the routes, but there remains a
13 significant backlog of capital improvements to these
14 critical transportation corridors. The majority of
15 these capital improvement projects are funded using
16 federal aid transportation funding, and we continue to
17 see projects being delayed, which causes serious
18 concern for our communities.

19 Major infrastructure projects being
20 considered for our state must factor in the need for
21 modern, safe and even larger roads for all the types
22 of traffic that would be using the road system.

23 And just to prove that point, if you want to
24 know what that means, really, take a drive between
25 Gakona and drive up to Tok. And I just want you to
1 know what condition the roads are in right now.

2 So when I hear people say we want an AKLNG,
3 you know, project going through the state, or some
4 other major infrastructure project happening in our
5 state, you need to drive the highway system to see if
6 those roads are ready for all of that traffic.

7 Because of our region's central location and
8 accessibility, we could be a prime staging partner for
9 our country's first line of defense and national
10 security. We have a ready and able workforce and are
11 open to opportunities to expand our role in this area.

12 Many of our shareholders are employed by the

13 Alyeska Pipeline Service Company at their Glennallen
14 response base and along the pipeline corridor. This
15 employment has provided our shareholders with
16 emergency preparedness training in such areas as
17 oil-spill response.

18 Ahtna welcomes working collaboratively to
19 maximize the development of strategic energy,
20 transportation and security solutions that would
21 benefit Alaska Native communities, the state of
22 Alaska, and our nation. As we move forward to
23 improving one, we can and we must improve them all.
24 Ahtna stands ready to be a partner in that.

25 As the Ahtna vision statement says, our
1 culture unites us, our land sustains us, our people
2 are prosperous.

3 Thank you to President Kitka, Secretary
4 Zinke, and to our co-hosts, Senator Lisa Murkowski,
5 Senator Dan Sullivan, Representative Don Young, our
6 Governor Bill Walker and Lieutenant Governor Byron
7 Mallott.

8 Thank you for the opportunity to be
9 critically engaged in ways that align Ahtna with our
10 partners to be strategically positioned for food
11 security, energy independence and strategic defense.

21 MS. SCHUBERT:

22 So my name is Gail Anagick Schubert, and I am
23 the President and CEO of Bering Straits Native

24 Corporation. We are one of the 12 regional Native
25 corporations in Alaska. I was born and raised in
1 Unalakleet. I'm Inupiat Eskimo, and Unalakleet is
2 located on the northwest coast of Alaska.

2 So like many Alaska Native regional
3 corporations, our mission really is to improve the
4 quality of life of our shareholders through economic
5 development while also protecting and sustaining our
6 culture and heritage. And that is really critically
7 important to us, and it continues to be important to
8 us.

9 We own more than 1.6 million acres of
10 subsurface estate in the Bering Strait, Seward
11 Peninsula and Norton Sound region, and we have
12 17 member villages, most of which border the Bering
13 Sea. There are actually 17 villages in the region,
14 and three of those villages opted out and have their
15 own corporations.

16 Our communities are diverse with different
17 economies, infrastructure, services and food and water
18 sources. Many are currently dealing with issues
19 caused by recent climate fluctuations.

20 We are Russia's next-door neighbor. Only
21 about 2.5 miles separate Big Diomedede, which is
22 Russian-owned, and Little Diomedede, which is
23 U.S.-owned.

24 The Bering Strait is largely uncharted with
25 relatively shallow waters. And you heard this earlier
1 from one of the speakers, mentioned that, you know,
2 the strait is pretty uncharted, but they're working on
3 it, which is really good to hear.

4 It's a mere 50 miles across from the U.S.
5 side to Russia, and what commonly is referred to as
6 the chokepoint.

7 You can see from the map that we are located
8 at a critical juncture geographically. The red line
9 shows the Northern Sea route over Russia, and the blue
10 line shows the Northwest Passage route over Canada.

11 So what are our needs? And that's really the
12 topic of the conversation that we're having now. We
13 want agencies with resources to start paying attention
14 to our national and regional needs. Several of our
15 villages are at high risk that can become life
16 threatening during winter storms.

17 We need seawalls to protect our villages from
18 fall storms which are incredibly destructive because
19 our water should be frozen by now, and they're not.

20 And I have attached to this presentation -- I
21 hope it works -- is a video that shows how destructive
22 the storms have become.

23 (Video played.)

24 MS. SCHUBERT: Betty Soolook, who lives on
25 Diomede, captured this footage on February 20th of a

1 storm pummeling the coast at the Bering Strait village
2 of Diomede, where she lives. Some buildings suffered
3 severe damage and flooding.

4 You can see that there is open water where
5 there should be at least six feet of sea ice along the
6 shore and the coast.

7 In our region, we have five villages that are
8 listed as an imminent danger according to the former
9 immediate action working group comprised of top
10 officials within the state and federal government.

11 Governor Walker has had to make several
12 recent disaster declarations in our region because of
13 severe weather, and these include Stebbins, because of
14 flooding, and Savoonga, because of hurricane-force
15 winds and freezing ice spray, which cause damage to
16 homes, and a power outage for one week. And this was
17 during the wintertime.

18 We need infrastructure investments in the
19 Arctic to ensure that our nation's borders are
20 protected and that there are resources available to
21 deal with a spill or discharge or a vessel losing
22 power and drifting toward our shores.

23 Currently, if there's an issue in the Bering
24 Strait or a national security threat to the nation,
25 the nearest military air bases are Anchorage at about
1 550 miles away and Fairbanks Eielson at about

2 450 miles away.

3 If there's a need for vessel support, the
4 nearest military base is on Kodiak Island about
5 800 miles from the Bering Strait. And that's the
6 approximate nautical mile distance between Washington,
7 D.C. and Miami, Florida.

8 I do want to say that the U.S. Coast Guard
9 does an excellent job. They always have. They've
10 been a part of village life for decades.

11 And I mentioned before when I have spoken
12 that I have very fond memories of the U.S. Coast
13 Guard, because they -- when they would come into the
14 villages, they'd bring fresh fruit, like oranges, and
15 hard candies and sometimes even chocolates for us. So
16 thank you very much. It was an important mission back
17 then and continues to be an important mission.

18 So there are geopolitical issues that can
19 impact our nation and region. And as you see, China
20 and Russia have stepped up military activities in the
21 Arctic.

22 President Putin's new military strategy
23 clearly emphasizes protection of Russian interests in
24 the Arctic. Restoration of the Russian military
25 infrastructure in the Arctic began in 2012. The
1 Russian defense ministry is building or restoring
2 facilities on the Russian continent and Russia's
3 Arctic islands.

4 And the Russians aren't our only concern in

5 the Arctic. The Chinese want equal trade access to
6 Arctic waters as well, and you heard a reference to
7 this earlier in one of the presentations. Chinese
8 vessels have, on several occasions, breached Russian
9 territorial waters without permission, and in 2015
10 they sent Marines on an exercise at the Bering Strait.

11 You can see from this chart that Russia has
12 done a lot in the past several years, in terms of its
13 military expansion. And it's great to hear that there
14 is cooperation and collaboration, in terms of what's
15 happening in the Arctic. But truthfully, I would much
16 rather trust the U.S. Government than Russia, in terms
17 of the protection and defense of our shores.

18 And because of this, we need ports,
19 functional and logistically situated airfields, roads,
20 a permanent military presence in the Arctic, such as
21 the U.S. Coast Guard or the Navy, and even small boat
22 harbors for our villages would help.

23 In our region, there are two major
24 opportunities for coastal infrastructure development.

25 You can either build a deepwater port at Port
1 Clarence, which still has some existing infrastructure
2 from the Coast Guard presence during the Cold War, or
3 you can -- well, you can actually do both. You can
4 also expand the Nome harbor to accommodate larger
5 vessels.

6 And this picture shows Port Clarence itself,

7 which is a natural deepwater harbor protected from
8 storms because of the spit of land that you can see
9 here.

10 Whatever development or other activities that
11 might happen in the Arctic, it's critical to note that
12 subsistence still plays a huge part in our cultural
13 identity and survival. Subsistence foods account for
14 more than 80 percent of our diets. Because of this,
15 any development that occurs in the Arctic, whether
16 onshore or offshore, must be done in a manner that
17 protects subsistence resources.

18 My family has lived and survived in the
19 Arctic for hundreds of years, and we hope to continue
20 to do so even with Arctic development.

25 **MS. BAHNKE:**

2 Thank you very much for this opportunity to
3 be here and share some perspectives with you. I'm
4 (speaking Native language.) My English name is
5 Melanie Bahnke. I'm originally from St. Lawrence
6 Island, as I told President Obama when I got to meet
7 him, where you really can see Russia from your house.

8 (Laughter.)

I'm the daughter of Sterling

10 and Arnold Gologergan. I'm married to Kevin Bahnke.
11 And together we have three beautiful Alaska Native
12 children.

13 As Gail said, I'm also a descendant from a

14 long line of people who have not just survived, but
15 thrived in the Arctic. And we intend to continue to
16 do so.

17 So when I speak to you today -- you've heard
18 others speak from a national security perspective,
19 from an environmental perspective, from a business
20 perspective, from an infrastructure perspective. When
21 I speak to you today, I'm speaking to you from a human
22 lens as a mother of, like I said, three Alaska Native
23 children who I hope will continue to live in our
24 region and have opportunities to thrive.

25 While I'm speaking, slides will be rolling.
1 Some of them are beautiful and show the wonderful
2 resources that we have available to us in our region,
3 and then some will also depict some of the challenges
4 that we have.

5 And I don't know if all of the challenge -- I
6 don't think all of the challenges or the beauty that
7 I'm sharing with you is limited to my region. I think
8 a lot of the things that I'm going to share with you
9 today are common to all of us as Alaskans and Alaska
10 Natives.

11 So first off, I mentioned I'm going to be
12 speaking to you from a human lens. My board of
13 directors is comprised of the tribal presidents of the
14 20 federally recognized tribes in our region. And
15 although we don't operate these two programs, their

16 number one and number two priorities for Kawerak to
17 focus on were housing and water and sewer.

18 When you think of Maslow's hierarchy of
19 needs, it's the most basic of the basic necessities.
20 You need food, water and shelter to survive.

21 And in our region, we've got five communities
22 without any water and sewer. And we heard a lot about
23 Flint, Michigan when they had their water crisis and
24 how long they had to go without clean drinking water.
25 Well, that's a reality every day in five of my
1 communities.

2 We live in the most generous country in the
3 world. We are always providing resources to other
4 countries, and yet, in many of our villages -- I know
5 this isn't unique to my region -- we have people
6 living in third-world conditions. These are our
7 nation's first people. We deserve better.

8 The other thing that I'd like to talk to you
9 about today, I would like to touch on, is the recent
10 announcement by the Trump Administration opening up so
11 many areas to offshore oil and gas leasing in our
12 federal waters.

13 Our region -- my board of directors, my
14 tribal council presidents and our regional for-profit
15 corporation has also joined in this stance, as well as
16 our CDQ, that we're opposed to oil and gas leasing in
17 the four basins that affect our region.

18 When you look at the map of the Bering
19 Strait, it is the chokepoint for all the traffic and
20 the marine mammal migration that occurs. Until
21 technology is put in place to protect and respond to
22 any kind of natural -- not natural, but manmade
23 disaster, we are opposed to oil and gas leasing in the
24 four basins that surround our region.

25 Michelle talked about co-management. Thank
1 you, Michelle. Your message was very important.

2 We were the first managers of our resources,
3 and we successfully managed these resources for
4 thousands of years. And now we have to squeeze our
5 way in to have a say. If we're provided a seat at the
6 table, a lot of times it's just one seat. And we're
7 surrounded by other people from federal or state
8 agencies who can outvote us. They outnumber us.

9 And we have to compete with very well
10 funded -- sometimes they're extreme animal rights
11 activists, or sometimes they're the sports fishermen,
12 in order for us to have a say about the very resources
13 that we rely on for our survival, not just for food
14 security. To me, comparing our subsistence way of
15 life to food security is like telling a Catholic
16 person that the bread and wine is important for the
17 calorie intake.

18 It's not just about the calorie intake for
19 us. It's about the survival of our culture. We

20 identify with our subsistence way of life as who the
21 we are as a people. So we need more opportunities for
22 co-management.

23 Increased opportunities for self-governance
24 compacting. I mentioned that to the OMB Director and
25 to the Secretary.

1 Thank you so much, Julie, for arranging this
2 opportunity for us to have this kind of dialogue with
3 such high-level officials.

4 I want to thank Senator Sullivan for
5 introducing a bill that would address the ivory ban.
6 In five states, what I'm wearing right now, I'm a
7 criminal, with this bracelet, this beautiful ivory
8 bracelet.

9 And we're -- like I mentioned earlier about
10 some of the extreme animal rights activists that were
11 having to contend with with the ivory poaching,
12 elephant ivory poaching, walrus ivory has gotten
13 sucked up into this conservation effort, although
14 we're not hunting walrus just for the ivory. It's a
15 practice that, for thousands of years, we don't waste
16 any part of the animal. And it's part of our art and
17 culture. And yet, in some -- in five states, walrus
18 ivory is being banned.

19 And Senator Sullivan is working with us to
20 try to overturn that. It's a violation of the
21 commerce clause for individual states to ban something

22 that is legal.

23 And the way I compare it, for those of you
24 who are Alaskans and proud fishermen, is imagine if
25 New Jersey banned all wild Alaskan salmon. That's how
1 it feels for us.

2 Walrus ivory is unique to Alaska. It's a
3 unique product coming out of Alaska. It helps support
4 a lot of our people who rely on subsistence. It
5 provides a marginal economic sustainability for them.

6 I also want to thank Senator Murkowski. The
7 initial budget that came out of this administration
8 was very alarming, but we knew we had a friend in
9 Congress. And in your very powerful seat, thank you
10 for restoring and actually plussing up some of those
11 line items that we depend on to provide services to
12 our people.

13 I'd like to urge that instead of constantly
14 having to battle for that, and as each administration
15 comes and goes, we never know how friendly they're
16 going to be to our American Indian and Alaska Native
17 programs that are funded.

18 These are services that we took over from the
19 government, through self-governance, through
20 compacting. Just as the federal government has
21 natural built-in systems to adjust for, for example,
22 cost of living increases for employees, those kinds of
23 protections need to be built into our self-governance

24 program so that U.S. has a trust relationship with
25 tribes. And it seems like, depending on who's in

1 office, we never know what kinds of services that
2 we're going to be able to provide. And these are
3 services, like I said, we took over from the federal
4 government.

5 The premature listing of animals as
6 threatened or endangered, again, there are extreme
7 ENGOs, some of whom have never seen a walrus, never
8 seen a seal, advocating with their massive resources
9 and networks to prematurely list species by species,
10 based on projected loss of sea ice, various animals
11 that we rely on.

12 And that's an issue that we're having to
13 contend with, and we need the resources to be able to
14 ensure that our -- they often call it traditional
15 knowledge, but I consider it first observer knowledge.

16 If you're a scientist, and you're doing best
17 practices, you're going to make sure that you have
18 direct observation as part of those steps. We're the
19 ones that are on the front lines every day seeing what
20 is happening with the animal populations, the ice
21 conditions, and we need to be included in part of this
22 decision making and dialogue.

23 We're still grappling with the rapid changes
24 and colonization. You heard earlier from Mike about

25 the substance abuse issues that we're being faced
1 with.

2 In my region, we're having a cultural
3 renaissance, and it's really helping -- you think, how
4 does that have anything to do with tackling your
5 wellness issues?

6 But having your core identity -- I had heard
7 one lady describe it as it felt like somebody ripped
8 out my tongue, not being able to speak her language.

9 Being able to celebrate the richness of our
10 culture and carry that on with our children, we're
11 implementing language immersion programs, and we need
12 additional support to continue that.

13 A lot of times when we apply for grants, they
14 want to know: Is this best practices? What research
15 model do you have to show that this is going to work?

16 And what we do know is that our culture for
17 thousands of years kept us healthy and well. That is
18 best practices right there.

19 So additional resources to grapple with those
20 issues in a way that is relevant to us not to have
21 some CDC person dictate that you have to have some
22 researcher from the university come and analyze your
23 outcomes. We know what works for our people. Our

24 culture kept us safe and healthy and well for

25 thousands of years.

1 You heard a little bit about the opportunity
2 for ecotourism. We did have the Crystal Serenity up
3 in our region, and it sounds like we can expect more.
4 It's not even "build it, and they will come." They're
5 coming anyways.

6 Somebody mentioned earlier that there is
7 16 passenger ships being built for Arctic conditions.
8 I do think that we need to figure out what the next
9 legacy act is. We've had the benefit of the 8(a)
10 program; with our fisheries, the CDQ program until
11 that was -- until the Magnuson-Stevens Act allowed for
12 that, our guys were standing on the shores of our
13 beaches, watching the big Seattle boats come in and
14 get rich off of our resources.

15 And now we have a piece of the pie. So one
16 of the challenges for us to figure out is: What is
17 that next big legacy act for the Arctic? Are we going
18 to be standing by as these cruise ships come in and
19 get wealthy off of our natural resources, or are we
20 going to participate somehow in this ecotourism?

21 I'm going to keep it short. We're behind
22 schedule. I don't know that I have said anything that
23 hasn't been said. There are so many reports that have
24 been written about the Arctic, so many different
25 strategies. Every branch of the federal agency has

1 its strategy on the Arctic. And those just need to be

2 funded. A lot of them have great recommendations in
3 there.

4 I did comment on the U.S. strategy for the
5 Arctic, though. I asked them to reorder the
6 priorities. I can't remember what the draft
7 priorities were, but of course we all want world
8 peace, so national security is always going to be
9 number one.

10 But number two should be the people of the
11 Arctic in any decision that is being contemplated. We
12 cannot afford to continue to have decisions about us
13 made for us without us. Without improved living and
14 social conditions, we stand to become the next
15 endangered species.

16 Thank you, Julie, again for this opportunity
17 to share my viewpoint about some of our priorities in
18 our region, which I think are common to many of our
19 regions.

2 **MR. ANDERSEN:** Right. Thank you, Julie.
we heard talk this morning, words said about unity of AFN and the
13 importance of unity. We represent the unity of AFN.
20 We're tribal consortiums, we're villages, we're Native
21 corporations, for-profits. And we all have
22 priorities.

23 You know, one of the things that was
24 mentioned by our -- during our delegation -- I think
25 it was Senator Murkowski who mentioned it, talking

1 about what is an ANC.

2 Well, same thing, is what is an ANO? I mean,
3 we've all become used to these acronyms, you know.

4 And I think part of the challenge that we face is how
5 do we translate or how do we interpret what it is that
6 is we do and how we affect the lives of our
7 constituents.

8 What I'd like to do is

15 ask that in their description of their priorities that
16 they take it a step further, that not only explain why
17 it's important, but what unique capabilities that have
18 been developed in order -- what we're doing to meet
19 that priority now, so that, you know, we describe
20 capabilities, that we describe some of the work that's
21 ongoing to achieve that priority.

25 **MR. WESTLAKE:** All right. Thank you, Ralph.

1 My name is Wayne Westlake. I'm the president
2 of NANA Regional Corporation. Of course we've been
3 cut down in time, so I will, first of all, thank Julie
4 and the AFN team for their work in setting this up,
5 and also thank the armed forces for being here and for
6 the presentations that they gave this morning, as well
7 as our Alaska delegation, and of course Secretary
8 Zinke and the crew -- most of all, I want to thank all
9 the Alaska Native leaders for flying a long ways, and
10 some of you are dealing some flight issues along the
11 way. So really appreciate you being here.

12 Couple of key things I think I want to leave
13 you with at NANA is -- well, NANA's region is the
14 Northwest part of Alaska. And those of us that are
15 familiar with Alaska, we know all the sizes of the
16 regions, as far as the different land masses that we
17 call our region.

18 NANA is about 38,000 square miles in size,
19 roughly the size of Virginia. And there are only
20 about 7,500 people that live in 11 communities there
21 that are along the coastal waters and along primary
22 rivers.

23 And we all know that there's no road systems
24 in many of these rural parts of Alaska. We heard
25 Michelle talk about the road system that goes through
1 their region. However, most of us do not have that
2 road system.

3 At NANA some of our unique capabilities, of
4 course we've had the -- we've been blessed with
5 resource-rich lands. And we understand the importance
6 not only of subsistence, but also the cash economy.
7 And for our shareholders to survive and to really
8 thrive, it really takes both. We have to have the
9 subsistence hunting and fishing. We've heard that
10 discussed earlier.

11 We also need jobs. You know, the cost of
12 living in the Kotzebue region is about 61 percent
13 higher for basic items like gas, groceries. You know,

14 that's already high from a national standard, as far
15 as Anchorage is concerned.

16 So we can't go backwards. We got to
17 continually look forward. And it's important for us
18 to look at how do we balance the subsistence resources
19 that we have that are so valuable to the people in the
20 region, and yet also look at developing the resources
21 that we have so that we can have jobs. And our
22 shareholders are asking for jobs. They want jobs
23 close to home.

24 So for us to do that, natural resources is
25 very important. Of course we think that at NANA we
1 have a good record of Arctic industrial operations in
2 overseeing the Red Dog Mine for the last 29 years. So
3 that's important. That's a strong capability. And
4 that Red Dog Mine supplies 73 percent of the U.S. zinc
5 exports. So we have partnered with multinational
6 corporations to take these resources around the globe.

7 So we've had that past performance and that
8 capabilities on for a number of years now, and we take
9 it very serious that we develop these resources
10 responsibly.

11 We are reminded by our shareholders and the
12 people within the region that subsistence hunting and
13 fishing is the most and important use of our natural
14 resources in our land. It's not an easy thing to do,
15 but we work at it and we will continue to work at it

16 as we move forward.

17 You know, we're not just an Arctic company.
18 We do have a federal-contracting group, and that
19 federal-contracting group is our largest business
20 unit. It's a global defense and federal group that
21 has operations in 46 states, two territories and
22 12 countries. And we're very pleased with the ability
23 to participate economically in federal contracting and
24 through the 8(a) program.

25 As we look to the future, we want to remind
1 President Trump's administration, the armed forces,
2 that we are a good partner, we are ready to work with
3 you. And of course we are very pleased that the Coast
4 Guard has been up in Kotzebue these last couple years.

5 In one recent summer -- and they've made a
6 big difference. In one recent summer, they saved six
7 lives in the region. So we want to thank the Coast
8 Guard for that and appreciate you being there as well.

14 MR. METROKIN:

21 Thank you for having me. My name is Jason
22 Metrokin, and I'm the President and CEO for Bristol
23 Bay Native Corporation.

24 I want to thank Julie and the AFN leadership,
25 our military leadership, Congressional leadership,

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1 Secretary Zinke, and again all of you for being here.

6 If I wanted to abide by Ralph's rules and
7 talk about the priorities of the Bristol Bay region, I
8 would just sum it up in one issue, and that's fish.
9 Wild Alaska salmon is the number one priority for the
10 people of Bristol Bay, and I think most folks in this
11 room are already aware of that.

12 But I will also abide by his rules and dig a
13 little deeper to describe what fish means to the
14 people of Bristol Bay and some of our other regional
15 priorities.

16 It looks like, just a quick scan of the room,
17 most of you are either Alaskan or you've been to
18 Alaska or you are former Alaskans working here in
19 D.C., so I'll try to walk through this relatively
20 quickly.

21 But Bristol Bay Native Corporation works on
22 behalf of our more than 10,000 Alaska Native
23 shareholders living and working in Bristol Bay and
24 other parts of the world. We are stewards of our
25 3 million acres of subsurface lands and ancestral
1 lands to the Bristol Bay people.

2 We work with in many different sectors. We
3 currently are in four different business sectors,
4 including government services, construction,
5 industrial services and tourism.

6 We also have a significant investment
7 portfolio. And over recent years we have surpassed

8 the billion dollars in annual revenue mark.

9 The corporate goals for Bristol Bay Native
10 Corporation are building the financial strength of the
11 corporation, paying predictable and increasing
12 dividends to our shareholders, balancing responsible
13 development and protection of our lands, fisheries and
14 resources, increasing shareholder employment and
15 development opportunities, supporting educational,
16 cultural and social initiatives that positively affect
17 the shareholders and descendants of Bristol Bay in
18 helping to develop economic opportunities in the
19 Bristol Bay region.

20 Some of the benefits we provide to our
21 shareholders, we're very proud to say that we have
22 paid consistent dividends quarterly to our
23 shareholders. In 1978 BBNC paid a dividend of
24 25 cents a share, and I believe today we're paying in
25 the neighborhood of \$48 a share on an annual basis.
1 We also contribute benefits to our elders

2 through additional dividend distributions, memorial
3 funds for burial services and the like, and employment
4 and training opportunities, internships, leadership
5 development and Work Ready Assistance Programs and
6 tremendous scholarship opportunities for our
7 shareholders throughout our shareholder base.

8 Bristol Bay of course is home to about 7400
9 people year-round and 10,000 brown bears. They're

10 both there for the same reason, and that's the fish.

11 There's about 40 million visitors to the
12 Bristol Bay region each summer. They have a one-way
13 ticket. They don't go home -- or they do go home and
14 they stay there, and that is the wild salmon of
15 Bristol Bay.

16 The harvest each year is significant. The
17 harvest in the Bristol Bay region represents about
18 50 percent of worldwide wild salmon harvest. And we
19 also represent the 30, 31 communities, depending on
20 which part of the argument you're from, Ralph. Some
21 of our communities are no longer populated, but we do
22 have 30 remote communities in Bristol Bay.

23 The infrastructure is very limited. Much
24 like all of rural Alaska, transportation to the region
25 and from the region is limited to barge and aircraft
1 access. Other than some intercommunity roads, there
2 are no roads in the region. And most -- between most
3 of our villages. So transportation of course is a
4 high cost, as well as the high cost of living and
5 energy.

6 I put a few examples again. Most of you
7 living in Alaska are already aware of these, but for
8 those of you who may not have been there for a while
9 or don't live in Alaska, the cost of goods and
10 services can be extremely expensive.

11 I put some averages on the screen. That's

12 not true of all communities, but you can see motor
13 fuel is anywhere from five to seven dollars a gallon.
14 That might be pretty low for some of our remote
15 communities. Heating oil about six dollars a gallon,
16 and a gallon of milk can run anywhere from eight to
17 ten.

So again, the cost of doing

22 business and the cost of living in Bristol Bay can be
23 significant.

24 I do want to talk about one of our other
25 priorities in the region, and that's the proposed
1 Pebble Mine. Again, if you've been reading up-to-date
2 news information on the project, you might be familiar
3 already. I just wanted to give a couple of updates.

4 The Bristol Bay region, being home to one of
5 the most prolific wild sockeye salmon runs in the
6 world, last year harvested 37.7 million sockeye, and
7 the fish had an off-the-vessel value of about
8 \$210 million annually. Forecasts from the Alaska
9 Department of Fish & Game are even greater for this
10 upcoming summer, so the run has been very strong.

11 In terms of jobs, the Bristol Bay salmon
12 industry provides more than 12,000 Bristol Bay
13 seasonal jobs and about 20,000 jobs nationwide. The
14 industry contributes 1.5 billion, in terms of its
15 total economic output, and commercial fishing is the
16 economic and social backbone of the region.

17 Bristol Bay is also home to many, many
18 sportfishing lodges, and the lodges generate about
19 another hundred million dollars in annual economic
20 activity and jobs in the region. And, again, the
21 fishery is the cornerstone of the subsistence
22 lifestyle of the people of Bristol Bay, many of whom
23 harvest fish in the hundreds, if not thousands of
24 pounds annually for their own consumption.

25 The Pebble project is a copper, gold and
1 molybdenum ore deposit located in the headwaters of
2 the Nushagak and Kvichak Rivers. It also includes
3 over 10 billion tons of ore.

4 The deposit side is on the north side of Lake
5 Iliamna near the villages of Nondalton, Newhalen and
6 Iliamna. And the mineral claims are on State lands
7 and are held by the Pebble Limited Partnership, which
8 at current time includes a Canadian firm, Northern
9 Dynasty Minerals, based in Vancouver.

10 The current mine plan covers just over
11 20 years and would mine about 10 percent of the
12 deposit. And materials would be brought through a
13 transportation corridor that would include a
14 year-round ferry crossing across Lake Iliamna, a
15 transportation corridor out to Cook Inlet and a buried
16 gas pipeline all the way from the Kenai Peninsula.

17 Currently, the mining companies have -- or
18 not currently, but for some time mining companies have

19 been looking at the Pebble deposit since the
20 mid-1980s. And due to concerns about potential
21 impacts to the region from the development of the
22 mine, Bristol Bay tribes and other stakeholders,
23 including BBNC, petitioned the EPA to look at the
24 potential impacts to the region and issue restrictions
25 that would be imposed on any effort to mine the
1 deposit.

2 In December of last year, the Pebble
3 Partnership filed for a clean water Section 404 dredge
4 and fill permit application with the U.S. Army Corps
5 of Engineers. And this has initiated an environmental
6 impact study on the proposed project.

7 The Corps has just started the scoping
8 process for the EIS and has allowed up to 90 days for
9 public comment. And those meetings are going on as we
10 speak.

11 Because fishing is so central to the Bristol
12 Bay region and Alaska, Alaskans in general and Bristol
13 Bay residents specifically are very skeptical of any
14 plans to mine the deposit in Bristol Bay. And despite
15 being a pro-mining state, Alaskans are opposed to the
16 Pebble project at a rate of about 60 percent, and
17 Bristol Bay residents are overwhelmingly opposed to
18 the project at about 80 percent opposition.

19 Thank you.

20 Following the sentiments of a majority of our

1

21 shareholders, BBNC has been opposed to the project
22 since 2009. We will have, and continue to advocate
23 for the economic, social and environmental interests
24 of our shareholders in the region, and that includes
25 healthy commercial sport and subsistence fisheries.
Just a couple quick examples I wanted to

2 mention. BBNC has made significant commitments to
3 creating and diversifying the economic opportunities
4 in our region, one of which is tourism. We've
5 purchased several sportfishing and wildlife-viewing
6 lodges in the region, including the historic
7 Katmailand properties and Mission Lodge.

8 We've also started a Bristol Bay River
9 Academy for young people to learn the industry and its
10 rich history and vibrant cultures, and working
11 together in partnership with our state and federal
12 agencies to ensure that our tourism sector is strong.

13 And lastly -- you're welcome, Wayne. Lastly,
14 I just wanted to mention another unique example of the
15 region is to work cooperatively with our village
16 corporations in trying to spur on additional economic
17 opportunities and development through the SBA 8(a)
18 model.

19 BBNC has been in the SBA
20 government-contracting program since the mid-1990s,
21 and that we believe, through our continued stewardship
22 not just of our lands, but of our people and their
23 corporations, we can help pass on the things that we

24 have learned in the government-contracting business.
25 And really promoting opportunities for our villages to
1 be sustainable and have home-based businesses that can
2 also do business domestically as well as abroad. And
3 we look forward to announcing a new partnership with
4 one of our village corporations here very soon.

12 **MS. POHJOLA:** My name is
14 Margaret Pohjola. As of last November, I have served
15 the Calista shareholders for 30 years now. And so I
16 have seen -- you know, back when I started in college,
17 we, you know, entered through some trying times,
18 losing millions of dollars when we first started off.
19 So we have slowly rebuilt Calista to where it is now.

20 So, you know, thanks to all the leadership,
21 the previous presidents that served Calista, and also
22 thank you to all the regional corporations. Thank God
23 for 7(i). You know, we slowly built it to where it is
24 now. So with all your support and help through 7(i),
25 that has helped us, and I'm very grateful for that.
1 Let me give you just a little bit of history

2 on Calista here. A lot of this information is on the
3 website or has been handed out before. So the Yukon
4 Kuskokwim region of Southwest Alaska is a vast and
5 beautiful part of Alaska, tucked between two mighty
6 rivers, the Yukon and Kuskokwim.

7 The area is roughly 58,000 square miles,

8 approximately the size of New York City -- New York
9 state. Excuse me. This isolated region is home to
10 the state's indigenous Yupik, Cupik and Athabascan
11 people, some of the most intact cultures in Alaska.
12 Many residents still speak their traditional language
13 and practice a subsistence lifestyle. And the area
14 encompasses 56 federally recognized tribes. There are
15 no roads connecting the region to the rest of Alaska.

16 A little bit about our region. Only one FAA
17 Part 139 airport in our entire region. Supplies/food
18 must be flown or barged in. Small businesses
19 limited -- are limited because of the high cost of
20 doing business. American Indian, Alaska Native and
21 active military serve in greater proportions than
22 general populations. VA.gov 2006 special report.
23 That was based on that.

24 With no roads or rail into the region, nearly
25 40 percent of building costs are due to
1 transportation. So a lot of our regional
2 corporations, we all have -- we all have the high cost
3 of fuel, high cost of energy, and so -- I have seen
4 and listened to all the -- we have general things that
5 we have to deal with in rural Alaska.

6 Calista, YKHC, Yukon Delta Fisheries
7 Development Association, AVCP Housing -- and AVCP and
8 AVCP Housing have -- we started meeting for a couple
9 years, and each organization hosted the different

10 meetings. So we would come up with: What was does
11 our region -- what can we do better for a region? You
12 know, what are the problems that we are facing?

13 I won't hit on every one of them, because we
14 don't have Vivian here and then Mike, so -- and then
15 we came up with the priorities for our region, and
16 that's in energy. It's called the Calista region
17 clean energy grid.

18 The purpose is to build first -- excuse me.
19 I have to -- my bifocals are not -- the purpose is to
20 build first planning phase of the Calista region clean
21 energy grid. The proposed system consists of 55 miles
22 of electrical interties with fiberoptic communication,
23 infrastructure energy storage, at two milliwatts of
24 electric thermal storage capacity and 600 advanced
25 woodstoves to displace heating fuel consumption costs
1 and units.

2 And the project cost is 23 -- a little over
3 \$23 million. Our partners are Nuvista Light and
4 Electric Cooperative, Inc., STG, Chaninik Wind Group,
5 Intellect Energy Systems, Deerstone Consulting. And
6 Calista Corporation is the lead organization on this
7 priority that was set by all the organizations, I
8 think came into agreement on what priorities we wanted
9 to set forth, which I believe the delegation already
10 has our priorities.

11 There was another -- we also did one for the

12 transportation, the YK freight and energy corridor. I
13 won't go into all the details. There's the Emmonak
14 Port improvements. That project costs about 16 to --
15 16 million, 3 million State funded, approved, so we
16 have a 13 million deficit there.

17 The corridor project is about a little over a
18 hundred million there. There's the St. Mary's
19 improvement project that was also on the list.
the Bethel hospital. Okay.

1 The hospital expansion and remodel, there's 54 units
2 for staff housing, and the project cost is about
3 336 million.

4 The other project that is a priority is the
5 Kongiganak Health Clinic, the YK Qavartarvik hostel
6 expansion, the Quinhagak Health Clinic and the
7 Akiachak Health Clinic. The Quinhagak Health Clinic
8 expansion, which is 1.5 million, the YKH Corporation
9 Bautista house replacement and an original family
10 service center.

11 There's also -- another category was on
12 housing. AVCP regional water and sewer project.
13 That's a priority of AVCP Housing Authority, AVCP
14 Housing.

15 The other priority that was part of the list
16 is resiliency, the Western Alaska Emergency Response
17 Center.

18 I just got a text a few minutes ago from
19 Andrew, and he told me that I got an update on the

20 Donlin project, and he said the final EIS comes out
21 next week. So that's -- the importance of having
22 costs of doing business in Calista region is very
23 important for us, so that the feasibility to develop
24 this project will, in turn, employ a lot of our
25 shareholders and other -- and nonshareholders as well.
1 So that's one of our priorities.

10 **MS. KORTHUIS:**

15 The first thing I wanted to make sure is we
16 recognize that we're not here by accident. Everyone
17 here has a history in our region, a history in our
18 villages, and everything that we see here -- you know,
19 we're not -- we're not the original designers of what
20 we see. We're the beneficiaries of, you know, all the
21 work that our grandfathers and our grandmothers put
22 together over the years.

23 So I just want to make sure that we're
24 recognizing the context of what's happening here at
25 this meeting, that we really do stand on their -- on
1 our shoulders. So I'd like to recognize that and say
2 thank you to those that have gone before us.

3 I work as the AVCP executive -- chief
4 executive officer. I've been in this position for
5 about a year and a half. I do work on the committees
6 with different people at AFN and attend their board
7 meetings.

8 So there's a lot going on within the state,

9 and interacting with both -- at every level, tribal --
10 the community level, tribal level, state level,
11 regional level, and here in D.C. at the national
12 level.

13 So our goal is to leverage that, leverage
14 everything that our ancestors and those that have gone
15 before us, take that and leverage it and use it and
16 make sure that we share it.

17 So one of the things that I want to share
18 first with you is that I believe that we're at a
19 pivotal point in the dynamic of what's going on here
20 with the federal government, because we're witnessing
21 what I'm seeing as a paradigm shift.

22 This paradigm is recognizing -- and it's a
23 process -- that the Arctic is a place of importance,
24 and it is a place -- it's a pressure point. It's
25 taking a lot of energy for the United States and other
1 countries away from the normal daily business of
2 running major world powers.

3 What we witnessed in the last or two or three
4 years, a geopolitical shift, and that center -- that
5 epicenter is Alaska. We saw some of the maps that
6 were shared with us over the past couple hours here,
7 and it only took nine hours of flight time. It took a
8 day and a half to get here, but that flying time was
9 nine hours.

10 Flying from Anchorage, you can go anywhere in

11 nine hours. That's really, truly, the essence of why
12 people are acting the way they're acting and saying
13 the things they're saying and doing the things they're
14 doing.

15 And I'm talking about people in government
16 and whole governments themselves, the Chinese, the
17 Russians, people that go to those Arctic council
18 meetings that have really no country in the Arctic.
19 That's why they're doing that.

20 So this paradigm shift, we have to recognize
21 that and use it and leverage it, because a lot of our
22 villages are those that are along the Bering Sea
23 coast, along the rivers and streams across the rural
24 parts of Alaska.

25 We don't see it. We don't see this gigantic,
1 huge shift that's happening, because it's not
2 happening right in front of us. It's happening all
3 around us.

4 What we do see are those things that are
5 occurring in our villages. The AVCP region two years
6 now have prioritized public safety as the number one
7 issue. What that means is in the 48 villages in our
8 region, people have the security or the feeling that
9 they are safe in their home and where they go to work
10 and where their kids go to school.

11 That, in my opinion, is a crisis in our
12 region, especially because we only have eight VPSOs

13 that cover the size of the state of New York.

14 What does that mean?

15 What that means is AVCP has 30 unmet
16 memorandum of agreements with communities in our
17 48-village base that we cannot meet. There's 30
18 memorandums of agreements that we have -- are trying
19 to fill that we cannot, because we don't have VPSOs in
20 those villages. That's a crisis.

21 The second priority from our delegate -- from
22 our annual convention is economic development, and the
23 third is community wellness. We know that those
24 things go hand in hand. You cannot separate those
25 things, because they don't exist in separation.
1 So of all those priorities that all of us

2 know about that we can describe, because our parents,
3 our children, our grandparents, our aunts, our
4 uncles, those are the people that are talking about
5 these priorities. And all we do is carry the message.
6 That's all our job is, is to carry the message so we
7 can spread it out as far as possible.

8 So the next thing I wanted to talk about was:
9 In 2016, the Energy and Natural Resource Senate
10 Committee traveled to Bethel and visited Oscarville.
11 One of the things we shared with them, that committee,
12 was the priorities, and Margaret talked about the
13 region's priorities.

14 There's a handout in the -- a pamphlet in the
15 folder that you received this year. What we've done

16 in the YK Delta is the sister organizations got
17 together and prioritized all these projects. If there
18 were millions and millions of dollars available for
19 these projects, I'm sure they would get done. I'm
20 sure of that.

21 But they wouldn't get done just because we
22 want them to. It's because our villages want these
23 things done.

24 So that's really where we want to focus our
25 energy and leverage so that the things that our
1 communities want are the things that we're advocating
2 for.

3 So in our region, we prioritize the
4 Yukon-Kuskokwim Energy/Freight Corridor. We're tying
5 that to the energy discussion that we're having in
6 this state.

7 We are also are requesting Alaska -- Western
8 Alaska emergency response center. We want that to be
9 located in Bethel. We have a building that we want to
10 renovate. The purpose of that is to house our VPSO
11 program so the first responders, who we know are the
12 VPSOs and the tribal police in our regions, they have
13 somewhere to go to call their headquarters, somewhere
14 to go that they can call -- they can have appropriate
15 training.

16 There is no such function in our region.
17 First responder -- some kind of coordinated effort.

18 We also support the millennium challenge
19 demonstration project that AFN puts on, has supported
20 in the -- that initiative here in Washington, D.C.

21 And then lastly I wanted to say something
22 about what Secretary Zinke said earlier today. He
23 said that we're too short in the field. I don't know
24 if you heard what he said, but he said we are too
25 short in the field. That's coming from a military
1 leader, a guy that -- he knows his stuff.

2 So if we're too short in the field, then
3 guess where we're going to have to put our energy? In
4 the field.

5 So with that message, I don't know -- I don't
6 know if you heard what he was saying, but what I heard
7 him saying is this. And it's the same thing that
8 Melanie, Melanie Bahnke said, that we have to identify
9 legacy initiatives, one, maybe two, maybe three, but
10 not many, and have him adopt them, those legacy
11 initiatives. Something that he can connect with,
12 because his time in that secretary position is not
13 going to be long. You know, who knows how long it's
14 going to be. But it needs to have something to do
15 with him and what he prioritizes as important and
16 something that he can accomplish, as well as us.

17 And then lastly I was thinking about if we do
18 it that way, it's going to provide all of us leverage,
19 not only for what he wants to meet the -- his goals,

20 but our goals. So the last thing I wanted to say is
21 last week I was watching C-SPAN.

22 Two minutes.

23 Last week I was watching C-SPAN, and the
24 Secretary of Defense was talking to the Senate
25 regarding the defense budget. And in that defense

1 budget, there were millions of dollars tied to the
2 presence of the Southern border.

3 So I was thinking, preparing for this
4 conference today: I wonder how much money is tied up
5 in the Northern border. I'd really like to know that
6 number, because I know we can double it and triple it
7 just by asking for these legacy initiatives that I
8 know that we can come up with.

11 MS. ROBERTS-HYSLOP: my name is Julie Roberts-Hyslop.
I come from

13 the Native village of Tanana, and I currently serve as
14 the Vice President for Tanana Chiefs Conference in the
15 Interior of Alaska.

16 You know, today we had the opportunity to
17 really come together to really bring forth some of the
18 issues, you know, that we're facing as Alaska Native
19 people, and there's a lot of commonality here that you
20 all heard today.

21 And I was thinking about -- you know, one of
22 my talking points is going to be about how much we
23 have changed in the last hundred years.

24 Earlier I stated my mom -- you know, she's 96
25 years old. She was born in 1922. She lived the
1 lifestyle to where there was no roads, no airplanes,
2 no telephones, you know, such a change in the last
3 hundred years.

4 And so, you know, thinking about: What is
5 our priorities for the Interior of Alaska?

6 And like many of you, we have the same
7 priorities. We have the same needs. We have the same
8 challenges. But I'm here to talk to you today about
9 something that we all come to depend on pretty much
10 every minute of our life, and that's technology. How
11 much we rely on broadband and internet, and our little
12 thing here that we carry around.

13 Probably each of us have one of these, right?
14 Who doesn't have one in this room? Everybody has one.

15 But in Alaska, you know, I've been involved
16 in Tanana Chiefs Conference for probably 15 years now,
17 and I started my career in my own village as a tribal
18 leader. And one of the challenges, you know, that we
19 faced was providing healthcare for our people. And we
20 wanted to provide the best healthcare for our people.

21 And one of the challenges, you know, that we
22 have is: How do we do that? How do we provide the
23 most top-notch healthcare for our tribal members?

24 And so we rely a lot on our technology. And
25 so today, you know, I was wanting to ask, how -- is

1 there somebody in here who represents the federal
2 government in telecommunications? I know later on --
3 okay.right now 8 we're faced with the
responsibility of providing -- I

9 said, like, our healthcare, but, you know, our tribes
10 continue to think of innovative ways, you know, to
11 deliver this healthcare.

12 And one of the challenges, you know, that we
13 have is the large area that we have to cover. And
14 where I live, you know, I'm like a lot of the
15 communities where broadband is pretty slow, and, you
16 know, right now -- in fact, I was just reading the
17 newspaper the other day about how they were starting
18 to address trying to get some of the new technology to
19 the remote areas of America.

20 And a lot of the tribes, not only in Alaska
21 but across the United States, have to come up with
22 ways to -- find ways to fund. And so -- and the
23 reauthorization of the Telecom Act of 1996, Congress
24 created the Rural Health Care Program. Congress
25 delegated authority to the FCC to regulate the RHC.
1 And one component of the RHC is the telecom program.

2 The Tanana Health Clinic, where I'm from,
3 where my mom received the cardiology care, is
4 dependent on the subsidies provided in the telecom
5 program. In 1997 the FCC capped the RHC at

6 400 million. The assumptions behind the reason for
7 the cap are now 20 years outdated.

8 In 2016, for the first time, the cap was
9 reached, and now applicants' co-pay was raised from
10 1 percent to 7.5 percent. That might not sound like
11 much, but in Alaska for fiscal year 2017, that
12 increase amounts to 11 million.

13 For 2018, we expect the Alaska tribal
14 healthcare system obligation to be over 35 million
15 from the 2015 obligation. The IHS funding is
16 shortfalled at 30 billion a year across the nation.
17 That means that all of our programs are drastically
18 stressed.

19 We can't afford a sudden new obligation of
20 35 million a year. Telehealth is fundamental to
21 delivering healthcare, and so the government, you
22 know, requires us, as tribes, to meet meaningful new
23 standards for our electronic health records or else be
24 subjected to fines, and yet doesn't provide the
25 adequate funding for the telecom infrastructure and
1 services.

2 And as I have demonstrated through my
3 mother's story, information technology is fundamental,
4 foundational to the delivery of healthcare in remote
5 Alaska.

6 So we ask FCC to reconsider its \$400,000 cap.
7 We ask Congress to mandate full funding for the rural

8 health programs, telecom program through a statutory
9 fix.

10 So as you know, our tribal members suffer
11 some of the worst healthcare disparities than any
12 other Americans. And since the implementation of
13 self-determination, Alaska tribes have reduced cost
14 while reversing the healthcare disparities.

15 If our ability to use IT and healthcare is
16 limited, it could undo the advancements we have
17 achieved. Providing healthcare is a federal trust
18 responsibility owed to the tribes, and the federal
19 trust responsibility expands across all federal
20 agencies, including FCC.

21 So on behalf of the 229 federally recognized
22 tribes in Alaska, we ask that you fulfill the sacred
23 contract by addressing this issue.

24 So that's my priority for my region right
25 now, but we do have the same needs that many of my
1 other colleagues have expressed. But for us, this is
2 going to be one area I think where we could really
3 make a difference if we can have the federal
4 government help us in making sure that we're using the
5 best dollars to reach the most resourceful ways to
6 help our people in Alaska.

14 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Mike Williams from Akiak, and
15 my bio is in your information.

16 I wanted to really thank Julie for putting me

17 on the agenda. And I requested to be on the agenda,
18 because I'm going to be speaking for not only my
19 tribe, but for those other tribes in the Arctic and
20 Northwest Boreal, Western Alaska, and Aleutian and
21 Bering Sea islands.

22 These land -- landscape conservation
23 cooperatives have steering committees all over these
24 areas, extending to Canada as well. The AFN and NCAI
25 and Alaska tribes support the Alaska Landscape
1 Conservation Cooperatives. Partnerships in ways that
2 continue to address all partners at the table.

3 The LCCs have been valuable -- has been a
4 valuable Department of Interior initiative, serving an
5 innovative place where tribes have come together to
6 work collaboratively with agencies, communities and
7 regional nonprofits on our shared adaptation
8 challenges.

9 With the rate of warming in Alaska being
10 twice the rate as the rest of the country, the
11 convening services and signs support that Alaska's
12 LCCs have provided for the past several years is
13 critical for our state's adaptation efforts. Enhanced
14 by the nonregulatory and voluntary arrangement, these
15 partnerships offer particular value to tribes as
16 venues where trust is built with federal and state
17 agencies, allowing co-management solutions to
18 naturally emerge.

19 The Fish and Wildlife Service has been, and
20 will continue to be, active participants in the LCCs,
21 but there are challenges with continued funding
22 support. The DOI should consider an alternative
23 funding approach. One option is the allocation of DOI
24 funding to collaboration between the BIA and the U.S.
25 Geological Survey through their climate change
1 adaptation science center. This center, formally the
2 Alaska climate science center, has worked very closely
3 with the Alaska LLC partnerships.

4 Recently, in collaboration with the BIA, the
5 adaptation center has jointly supported a tribal
6 science liaison force to serve all 229 Alaskan tribes,
7 as well as other efforts aiding with adaptation
8 efforts.

9 Through Alaska's LCCs, this center has also
10 developed strong connections with other federal and
11 state agencies, putting them in a position to help
12 keep the current diverse group of LLC partners working
13 together. Ensuring these partnerships continue also
14 provide -- provides the governor's Climate Change Task
15 Force. These establish effective opportunities for
16 developing collaborative solutions for climate
17 adaptation.

18 Lastly, funding -- approximating what
19 Alaska's LCCs have received in prior years is
20 3.5 million annually, would be necessary to fund

21 coordination staff that support the LCCs steering
22 committees and operations of the partnerships as well
23 as some of the level science funding to be guided by
24 the partnerships.

25 While the science supporting it and conducted
1 by the LCCs has been very directly valuable for the
2 many state and federal agencies and communities
3 involved, support of the LCCs convening would remain
4 more valuable and could be accomplished for less.

5 And you have -- I have provided this classic
6 information on what the LCCs are all about. And I
7 just really appreciate the support for continued work
8 on our behalf, so all of us can -- you know, I've
9 heard that some of the communities are supporting
10 development of our resources and some are not.

11 So I think with this partnership, I think we
12 can prepare everything, all the information together,
13 to make right decisions for those projects. So I just
14 wanted to say thank you to our military folks that
15 have made those concepts, and Adapt Alaska as -- their
16 website information is here as well.

17 So thank you very much.

19 **MR. ANDERSEN:** Jodi Mitchell couldn't be
20 here, but we have Jaeleen Kookesh.

21 **MS. KOOKESH:**

My name is Jaeleen Kookesh. I'm the vice

25 president and general counsel and corporate secretary

1 for Sealaska Corporation. That's quite a mouthful.

2 I won't tell you everything I have to do with
3 all those titles, but one of my responsibilities is
4 implementing the public policy priorities that are
5 adopted by the board of directors for Sealaska
6 annually.

7 And so I'll give you a quick overview of
8 those items, but I have some experience in public
9 policy, having spent ten years out here in Washington,
10 D.C., so it's always weird to come out here as a
11 visitor, having lived here, and all my kids were born
12 out here.

13 Some of my former colleagues are out here in
14 the audience. I worked for Van Ness Feldman for ten
15 years. And I couldn't pass up the opportunity to
16 acknowledge while I'm up here, Bill Van Ness, who
17 passed away a couple months ago, one of the founding
18 members of Van Ness Feldman and one of the authors of
19 the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. If he was
20 still with us, he would probably be here in this room
21 with us. And I just had to acknowledge him for a
22 minute, just for the personal support he gave to me in
23 mentorship, but also for what he did for the Native
24 community. So thank you for indulging me with that.

25 So Sealaska annually adopts public policy

1 priorities. And for this year, we have three pieces
2 of legislation that are very important to us. First
3 is the landless legislation. It's also called the
4 unrecognized communities of Southeast Alaska.

5 Second is the Alaska Native veterans
6 allotment equity act. And third is the King Cove land
7 exchange.

8 All of those have standalone bills that are
9 pending in the current Congress, and they're also
10 included in Senator Murkowski's ANCSA improvement act
11 bill.

12 And real quick on each of those, the landless
13 is for the five communities of Southeast Alaska that
14 were left out of ANCSA in 1971. Those are the
15 communities of Ketchikan, Haines, Petersburg, Tenakee
16 and Wrangell.

17 And we've been working on this legislation
18 since -- well, since before I was born. It's a
19 actually very near and dear to my heart. I've been
20 working on this since I started practicing law, and I
21 know what it's like to be left out of ANCSA, because I
22 was born after 1971. And so luckily I was gifted
23 shares by my parents, and then Sealaska did utilize
24 the opportunity to include descendants.

25 But these five communities were left out of
1 ANCSA, and they had no appeal right, because unlike
2 the other regions in Alaska, Southeast Alaska did not

3 have a right to appeal the list that included the
4 communities that would be recognized in ANCSA.

5 So we continued to pursue that, and we
6 appreciate the support of the rest of the Alaska
7 Native community in supporting those efforts.

8 And unlike the rest of you, I don't get to go
9 home until Wednesday night, because I have landless
10 representatives coming here tonight. And for the next
11 two days, we'll be on the hill going door-to-door
12 pursuing that once again. So that's one of our big
13 issues.

14 Of course the Alaska Native veterans, we have
15 many in our region who served in Vietnam. One of our
16 board members, Bill Thomas, is a Vietnam veteran, and
17 so that issue is very important to us. And I was
18 involved when the original version of the bill passed.
19 How long ago was that, Allen?

20 But it was really stripped away of a lot of
21 provisions that were important to making that bill
22 equitable, so it's important that we do amend the bill
23 and have it provide what is needed for our Native
24 veterans.

25 And actually, in that regard, we have a high
1 level of service in our region, and there is a Native

2 veterans totem pole raising in Klawock this summer in
3 August, and I don't know if our members of the armed
4 forces are aware of it.

5 Senator Sullivan has seen it. And I hope
6 that some of you will send representatives to that.
7 It's an amazing totem pole. I have seen it. And all
8 of the different branches are represented on the pole.

9 And the King Cove land exchange is the last
10 major piece of legislation we're working on, and this
11 involves land that was owned by -- is owned by Shee
12 Atika Corporation, one of our urban corporations in
13 Southeast.

14 We have of course, as the regional
15 corporation, own the subsurface. They are choosing to
16 sell their land, unfortunately, on Admiralty Island
17 National Monument. We don't want to also sell our
18 land, but we also don't want to have another split
19 estate issue with the Forest Service, where we own the
20 subsurface under the Forest Service, so we're trying
21 to work on a land exchange to get us out from under
22 the Forest Service and to deal with other split estate
23 issues. So that's another important issue for us, in
24 terms of legislation.

25 So the other things that we do, in terms of
1 priorities -- so Sealaska, we have over 22,000

2 shareholders. We had over 16,000 shareholders when
3 ANCSA passed, so we are the largest, in terms of
4 shareholder base.

5 That being said, we also have the smallest
6 land entitlement, because our people in Southeast were
7 very aggressive in pursuing land claims prior to

8 ANCSA, so we have a much smaller land base because of
9 a previous cash settlement.

10 But while we only own about 1 percent of our
11 original homeland in Southeast, the 28 -- there's
12 20 million acres in Southeast Alaska; we only own
13 about 360,000 acres.

14 The whole entire region is still important to
15 us, so we're very involved in the planning and efforts
16 of the Tongass National Forest and the Forest Service
17 in our region to make sure that the activities that
18 they pursue or don't pursue, that we have a voice in
19 their activities.

20 The Forest Service is supposed to be managed
21 as a multiple-use forest, a multiple-use management.
22 Unfortunately, over the years it's become more and
23 more of a conservation-managed forest as opposed to
24 providing opportunities for economic development.

25 So we are constantly engaged with the Forest
1 Service and in our region to make sure that the forest
2 is continuing to contribute to the economic health and
3 social health of our communities, and, you know,
4 making sure that we continue to have access for
5 subsistence and other resources in the forest.

6 And we all, as part of the timber industry,
7 because we do continue to harvest timber on our
8 lands -- it's a much smaller industry. We do need to
9 collaborate with the Forest Service, with the State,

10 with the Alaska Mental Health Trust, University of
11 Alaska to make sure that we have a viable timber
12 industry.

13 Lastly, just real quick, we also support
14 energy development and improving energy infrastructure
15 in our communities. Subsistence, of course, very
16 important for all of us, continues to be a priority of
17 us. I come from a proud family of subsistence
18 citation recipients.

19 My dad successfully challenged a citation in
20 Alaska through the Supreme Court, and they won. If
21 Sky Starkey is still in here, I want to thank him for
22 his legal representation of the community of the four
23 individuals from my home that were cited for sockeye
24 fishing, and they won at the state supreme court. So
25 that was -- we were very involved at Sealaska as well,
1 just supporting that effort, because it's so
2 important. Our people shouldn't be criminals for
3 surviving on the land.

4 And I guess one other thing I just want to
5 note for all of you, because I haven't heard it yet --
6 I know if my dad was here, he's a, you know,
7 impeccable chairman. He would say that's it.

8 The census. 2020 census is coming up, and I
9 just want to make sure everybody has that on their
10 mind, because that's very important for the public
11 programs that benefit our communities.

21

MS. BURETTA:

2 So my name is Sheri Burette, and I'm the
3 chairman of the board for Chugach Alaska Corporation.
4 And I've been doing that for almost 20 years now.

5 I am very pleased and honored to be here with
6 this distinguished group. On the AFN, there's such a
7 diverse position from all of our communities and our
8 organizations, but we work together and it's so
9 important. So I'm very happy to be here.

10 One thing that I wanted to mention, that
11 Secretary Zinke talked about, was a hundred-year
12 vision. And our board recently met for strategic
13 planning, and we have a hundred-year vision for
14 generational prosperity. And it includes respect,
15 responsibility, reciprocity and resiliency for our
16 people and our communities.

17 And so I'm really glad that there's
18 consistent messaging from our leaders at the federal
19 government and where we're going with our corporation.
20 We've invested in some long-term development with the
21 granite mine recently, that we believe will last a
22 hundred years, as well as the carbon project that is a
23 hundred-year commitment. So we have a responsibility
24 for future generations to make sure that we build a
25 strong foundation for the corporation and make sure
1 our communities are strong.

2 So the four areas that I wanted to speak to,

3 as far as priorities that we have, are with the --
4 similar to what Jaeleen was saying. The split estate
5 that happened during the purchase of surface estate
6 when the Exxon Valdez oil spill happened in the heart
7 of our region, there was a settlement with the state
8 and federal government that created the EVOS trustee
9 council. And 240,000 acres of surface estate was
10 purchased, of which went back to the federal
11 government. But the Chugach Alaska Corporation
12 retains ownership of the subsurface estate, which is
13 the dominant estate, which is where we're doing the
14 granite quarry on our first development.

15 But what we found is that that creates a
16 challenge for us moving forward, and so we have
17 this -- it started with Senator Murkowski's ANCSA
18 improvement act, but it's a stand-alone bill now that
19 I just heard that we have a hearing on for next week,
20 which was a good movement on it. And so that's an
21 extremely important place for us to be.

22 Just after the oil spill happened in 1989,
23 which will be 30 years next year, Chugach Alaska
24 Corporation filed for bankruptcy in 1991. And had it
25 not been for the SBA 8(a) program, which was the
1 missing link of the settlement act, which created an
2 economic engine for Alaska Native corporations to be
3 able to be profitable and generate income, we would
4 have probably lost our land in the bankruptcy.

5 But we've worked hard to build
6 infrastructure, to be able to have a partnership with
7 the federal government through Department of Defense
8 on our government contracting, and we have a stellar
9 performance history. And we intend to be a government
10 contractor that can be unparalleled in moving forward.

11 We think it's an important partnership and
12 relationship, and I know that there are many other
13 ANCs that are also investing in government
14 contracting. And it's a perfect fit.

15 And that's why I was so glad to see so many
16 of our military represented here and the partnership
17 that's moving forward through AFN, so I appreciate
18 that.

19 The other areas that we're looking at is
20 community and regional economic development and
21 infrastructure development. We facilitate an annual
22 gathering of all of our village corporations, tribes
23 and nonprofits to look at priorities in the region;
24 and especially since the oil spill happened, a lot of
25 our communities have suffered because of economic
1 development challenges and effects on our subsistence
2 resources. And so we're working together to have a
3 fund to be able to build economic development to focus
4 on infrastructure needs in our communities and to work
5 together to move forward. The SBA 8(a) program
6 continues to be a high priority for us to protect it

7 and build it and allow for opportunities to develop.

8 And then the fourth one is in regards to ANWR
9 revenue sharing for Alaska Natives. As this
10 opportunity opens up for Alaska Natives to have a
11 partnership with the federal government to be able to
12 look at opportunities in Alaska for development, it
13 makes perfect sense that our Alaska Native
14 corporations would have an opportunity to participate
15 in that.

16 The history of the Land Claims Settlement Act
17 was that a lot was given up to create the opportunity
18 to access oil on the North Slope, and that moving
19 forward, the economic engines that the Alaska Native
20 corporations are, will be what moves us forward as a
21 state.

MR. ANDERSEN

6 BBNA's priorities are in the meeting packet,
7 and I won't go through them. I want to thank you all
8 of you for participating, thank you for traveling back
9 here. part of the reason
19 for this gathering is to -- for networking, so if you
20 have questions, if you would like to discuss the
21 priorities further with any members of the panel or
22 any AFN members in the room, please pull them aside,
23 have a chat with them, get to know them, get to
24 understand the issues.

25

There's no reason for the -- this is really the beginning of the discussions, is the way I see it.

15 **MR. PANAMAROFF:** I'm Panamaroff. I'm the
16 Regional Legislative Affairs Executive for Koniag,
17 Incorporated. Koniag is one of the 12 ANCSA regional
18 corporations, and our region is located in the Gulf of
19 Alaska in the Kodiak Archipelago.

20 Although I reside in Anchorage and am a guest
21 of the Cook Inlet Region there, I am proud to say that
22 I was born and raised on the spectacular Kodiak
23 Island, which I still call home.

24 Today we're going to have a panel discussion
25 on policy initiatives of the various agencies that are
1 represented here today.

13 **MR. KENNEDY:** Thank you, Tom.

14 About an hour ago, I thought I was off the
15 hook. Congratulations to the facilitator. I couldn't
16 believe he got through two hours in an hour, but he
17 did and here we are.

18 So I'm going to go pretty quickly today.
19 Thanks for having me here. My boss was on this
20 morning, Admiral Gallaudet, and he kind of gave you
21 some high-level tips about what NOAA is up to.

22 I'm going to get into a little bit more of
23 the detail. I'm going to talk a little bit about our
24 strategy and our action plan and some of our

25 priorities. And I'm going to go through this pretty
1 quickly.

2 So next slide, please.

3 So our vision. Basically, first bullet here
4 deals with the fact that there's a tremendous number
5 of issues because of the changes going on in Alaska,
6 and what NOAA's trying to do is provide some of the --
7 what we're calling environmental intelligence to help
8 solve and provide information and data for some of the
9 issues that are arising.

10 And so we -- NOAA -- are involved in a
11 variety of different issues from fish, to weather, to
12 research, to you name it. I'm going to go over that
13 in a little bit more detail.

14 The second bullet here, global implication of
15 the Arctic. Alaska -- our Arctic is only part of a
16 huge Arctic. And without kind of sharing and working
17 very closely with all of our partners, both
18 scientists, government and indigenous populations, we
19 really wouldn't be getting the clear full picture of
20 what's going on in the Arctic and be able to make some
21 of the assumptions and decisions that we make without
22 the data coming from other places. So a very
23 important part, as far as we're concerned, is working
24 with the global Arctic initiative.

25 Next slide, please.

1 So you've seen our vision. We have an action

2 plan. This is a plan that was developed after we had

3 a strategy and our goals, and what we felt pretty
4 strongly about is we needed then to be able to say a
5 lot more specifically: What is it we're doing around
6 these goals?

7 And so we have an action plan, as you can see
8 here. It was through '15. We're getting ready to
9 update it again. There is an appendix that has
10 200-some-plus individual efforts that NOAA's involved
11 with working on our goals and objectives.

12 Interestingly enough, there's five agencies
13 right now who are all looking at either developing an
14 Arctic strategy or renewing. So we're not alone. Air
15 Force, Navy, Department of Homeland Security, Coast
16 Guard and us, all are meeting together, actually,
17 occasionally to talk about how we're collectively
18 working on revising and updating our strategies.

19 Next slide.

20 You may also know -- in fact, I think it's
21 been mentioned -- there is a national strategy for the
22 Arctic region; came about during the Obama
23 administration. They have three lines of effort.

24 Those are on the left. So security, number one;

25 stewardship, and then international cooperation, which
1 I have already mentioned.

2 What we've done is try and take our strategic
3 goals and map them against the lines of effort for the
4 national strategy. So you can see -- and this is kind

5 of a good cross-section of the types of issues that
6 NOAA's involved with. Sea ice and weather, under
7 security, those could fall under others as well, but
8 they do fit there. And obviously these are both
9 pretty significant issues for what's going on in the
10 Arctic right now.

11 Foundational science, the ecosystem, as the
12 ice and the changes take place, is dramatically
13 changing. Species are moving all around. We're
14 deeply involved in that. Stewardship is really kind
15 of our NMSS. Fisheries issues, resilient healthy
16 Arctic communities, a variety of things, everything
17 from oil-spill response to charting, to you name it,
18 again, our international and national partnerships.

19 Next slide.

20 So with all the things that I mentioned that
21 we're involved with, we, NOAA, felt like we needed to
22 take a shot at, okay, of everything we're doing, what
23 might we highlight, what might we really kind of try
24 and put maybe the first among equals, if you will.

25 And so we developed this process. You see
1 the drivers on the left, the energy development,
2 transportation, economic development and climate
3 impacts --

So we developed, among drivers,

11 economic development, transportation -- energy
12 development, transportation, economic development,
13 climate impacts.

14 And then we had some criteria for what we did
15 to come up with our priorities. And that's critically
16 emerging issues, national relevance -- and I won't go
17 through all of them -- consistent with NOAA's
18 priorities and then leveraging partnerships. All of
19 those things then led to us coming up with, as I said,
20 maybe first among equals,

And so from the exercise that we did, these
264

1 are the three areas that we came up with as maybe
2 paying special attention to.

3 So obviously given the importance of weather
4 and sea ice, that came to the top. Climate impacts
5 and biological resources, and then human health and
6 natural habitats and then finally improved navigation
7 services.

8 You heard from my boss this morning. We have
9 a charting plan for the Arctic. The Arctic has not
10 been charted well, and we're working very hard to come
11 up with a plan that will allow us to get a lot more
12 area charted than it has.

13 So that's all I had. I had two or three
14 quick things just to throw out that are kind of
15 interesting developments that are taking place right
16 now.

17 And one is two -- a couple of discussions
18 about infrastructure. There is a Wilson Center

19 University of Alaska and Sandia Lab study that started
20 on Arctic infrastructure. There is a small group that
21 met to begin to develop the discussion around that --
22 there's going to be a workshop in June or July -- but
23 specifically about Arctic infrastructure.

24 There's also a National Academy of Sciences
25 attempt to do marine -- maritime infrastructure in the
1 Arctic. So there's a couple of discussions that are
2 really beginning to heat up about infrastructure.

12

MR. WONG: Thank you for having me today,

13 everybody. It's nice to see everyone again.

14 I'm told I have 27 seconds. So I will say
15 that the initiatives that we have for HUBZones seem to
16 be well received, so we should be seeing improvements
17 to that program.

18 And then we're trying to make improvements to
19 all four of the SBA programs, which are 8(a), HUBZone,
20 Women-Owned, and Service-Disabled Veteran.

21 Just to give you a clue with that, the
22 proposal that I have is that if the
23 government-contracting agency has missed their target
24 for any of the socioeconomic goals in one year, then
25 the next year they ought to have direct sole-source
1 authority for any of those targets that they missed.
2 So they have -- so what it does, it will empower every
3 program that we have.

4 And then in general, if they can go with that

5 one, we have one other one that I'll wait till the
6 national 8(a) that will improve the 8(a) program that
7 I think you guys will really like.

8

18 MR. O'RIELLY:

22 I want to thank you for having me. And first
23 of all, I should kind of outline: For many of you who
24 don't focus on the FCC, there are five members of the
25 commission. I am one of them. One of the five is

1 selected as chairman. I am not that person, for good
2 or bad.

3 And so we're structured in having three from
4 the majority party, the administration, and two from
5 outside the administration party. And so we have a
6 3/2 breakdown, and we work through issues. Most of
7 the work that we do is bipartisan. We are an
8 independent agency, so we are not part of -- directly
9 of the administration. We work and tackle issues
10 independently of that structure.

11 I wanted to give you just a little flavor and
12 say that I am not from Alaska. I'm from Buffalo,
13 which is not anywhere close. And I -- but I want you
14 to know I did spend time trying to understand Alaska,
15 and I've been there twice. I spent 30 days, give or
16 take, in 2006 for an election. And then in -- I spent
17 nine days when I first took this job in 2014, and
18 traveled throughout the state to try and understand

19 what issues were facing the Alaska providers on many
20 different fronts, whether it be the telephone
21 companies, whether they be the broadband providers,
22 which can be the same, whether they be the local
23 broadcasters. We tried to tackle every single element
24 and understand what their unique issues -- and I
25 walked away completely with a different mindset of
1 what Alaska is.

2 It is a unique place that is not copied or
3 comparable in anywhere else in the United States. So

4 that helps frame my addressing of issues at the FCC.
5 And we have a lot of them. Let's not kid ourselves.

6 We have a full plate of issues that we try to
7 address. And the top of those issues are making sure
8 that broadband is able to be reached to all Americans
9 that would like access. And that's very hard in
10 places like Alaska, where the terrain's incredibly
11 difficult and challenging. And the building cycle is
12 so short. And the supply -- getting supplies to the
13 area can be just as difficult.

14 So we're cognizant of that, or certainly I
15 am, and we try to work through -- I was talking to
16 your telephone companies, which happened to be in a
17 different room this morning, and we were talking
18 through issues on making sure that their
19 survivability -- I was one of the lead authors of
20 what's known as the Alaska plan, to try to address the

21 funding issues in Alaska to bring some reforms in that
22 direction and also allow broader -- broadband
23 build-out throughout the state.

24 We recognize that Alaska has challenges, in
25 terms of broadband, and we are trying to face those
1 front on. There are difficult issues that we have to
2 face. I know one issue we were talking about just
3 before I walked in, that I know that's front and
4 center for many people here, and that's our Rural
5 Health Care Program.

6 In my time in Alaska, I got to see the
7 benefits of what is happening, what's able to be done
8 in Alaska. In other parts of the United States, the
9 program is used for much higher bandwidth purposes,
10 fancy gizmos that are incredibly expensive.

11 But in Alaska, it is about basic healthcare
12 services. And those carts that Senator Stevens was so
13 initiative [sic] in getting out and into the
14 marketplace and getting out to the rural communities
15 were -- are responsible for the connection between the
16 carts and the major cities, so we can make sure that
17 service and healthcare service is provided to the
18 citizens and make sure that the costs are -- you know,
19 are reduced, in terms of the patients that need to be
20 shipped, whether it be to Anchorage or to Seattle or
21 where else, in terms of the issues that may arise. So
22 we're very cognizant of that.

23 Reforms, we haven't run into a problem in
24 that regard, because our program is oversubscribed,
25 and we're trying to figure out what to do for our
1 budgetary purposes. And so I'm very cognizant of what
2 it means for Alaska, and we're very protective for
3 that going forward.

10

MR. PANAMAROFF: Thank you, Mr. O'Rielly.

11 And just special thanks for when you came to Alaska,
12 you got out to, I understand, a couple of our villages
13 on Kodiak Island, so I appreciate you not just staying
14 in the urban areas and actually getting out.

5 **MR. FORSGREN:** Thank you. I appreciate the
6 opportunity to be here, having spent a significant
7 part of my previous career working for the Alaska
8 delegation staff. This is a little bit like old home
9 week. And I appreciate seeing a lot of very familiar
10 faces in the audience.

11 I'm also going to be extremely brief. There
12 are a lot of major issues in Alaska related to EPA,
13 and I'm happy to answer questions on any of them. I
14 will hit highlights pretty quickly.

15 In February, Administrator Pruitt made a
16 decision to -- I'm not going to -- I'm going to get it
17 wrong, because I've done -- as many times, I should
18 know it -- to halt the proposed withdrawal of the
19 determination to proceed with the 404 -- for the

20 regional administrator to proceed with the 404 veto on
21 the Pebble Mine project in Alaska.

22 That's a very long-winded way of saying we're
23 stopping where we are. Nothing's going to go forward
24 until the -- we have a much better idea what the
25 project is, and then we're going to have another round
1 of public comments.

2 The administrator thought we would be putting
3 out -- we would be doing -- going to another round of
4 public comment sooner than we have, but frankly we're
5 not far enough developed that it would be very helpful
6 to anyone in the community until we have a much better
7 sense of what the permit might actually look like, to
8 open it back up for comments at this time.

9 We do -- there will be another round of
10 comments, but right now we don't believe it would be
11 particularly helpful. And we have received a lot of
12 comments from the public on that score.

13 The second thing that's taking up a whole
14 large percentage of my time is the scope of the Waters
15 of the United States regs. We have a two-, maybe
16 three-, depending on how you count the applicability
17 rate, part rule on -- the President's given us
18 direction to withdraw -- to propose the repeal of the
19 2015 Waters of the U.S. regs to -- and to replace them
20 with a new set of regulations.

21 The public comment on the step one proposal

22 to withdraw and temporarily replace -- or to
23 permanently repeal and to temporarily replace with the
24 87 rules, we are -- the comment -- we opened up for
25 initial comment period, that comment period is closed,
1 although there may -- very well may be a supplemental
2 coming out in the near future to answer a few more
3 questions that people might have on the repeal aspect.

4 And then there will -- and then in the not
5 very distant future we will see a proposed regulation
6 on what -- how we would propose to restructure and
7 rewrite the scope of the Waters of the U.S. regs.

8 We have undergone extensive tribal
9 consultations, including with a lot -- a number of
10 Alaska Native corporations and tribes. We have had
11 extensive federalism discussions with states, and
12 we're starting to go to work. And that process will
13 continue through the comment period and through the
14 rest of the process.

15 I would like to give you a little heads-up on
16 where we are. We were quite successful. Congress was
17 quite generous this year in providing funding for a
18 number of infrastructure initiatives, some of which
19 applied directly to Alaska villages or Alaska -- the
20 Alaskan community, and some would be -- a number would
21 within eligible if cities or villages would choose to
22 take advantage of them.

23 On the "would be available to," we received a

24 significant increase in a loan guarantee program
25 called the WIFIA, Water Infrastructure Financing
1 Innovation Act, and that allows a very creative --
2 allows us to pay for up to 49 percent of projects.

3 Projects could be bundled throughout an
4 entire region to come up with the financing for water
5 infrastructure. And the beauty of it is the terms
6 could be very flexible, up to 35 years and at the
7 treasury rate.

8 Those projects would have -- can have a --
9 can be virtually anything that could possibly deal
10 with wastewater, drinking water-related projects.

11 The others more specifically is they
12 provided the \$20 million in fiscal 2018 for the Alaska
13 Native villages STAG funding program. We look forward
14 to looking for opportunities to get that money out the
15 door to -- while the 2019 President's budget did not
16 fund any -- what's referred to as regional projects,
17 with one exception. They provided -- the budget
18 provided for \$3 million for Alaska Native village
19 infrastructure.

20 Now, we'll see what -- I suspect Congress
21 might have -- be a little more generous than that, but
22 at least the President's budget does recognize the
23 critical importance of getting infrastructure to the
24 Alaska Native villages.

25 With that, there's a number of other things

1 coming, but I'll look forward to answering your
2 questions and talking with you further.

8 **DR. FARRELL:** Thank you very much. And thank
9 you, Ms. Kitka, for inviting me to be here today. And
10 I would say that Fran Ulmer regrets that she can't be
11 with you here today. She was here last week, as
12 Ms. Kitka knows. Fran Ulmer is the chair of the
13 Arctic Research Commission.

14 So we -- the commission's been looking very
15 carefully at AFI's [as spoken] priorities. We looked
16 at your white paper carefully, we read that, we read
17 your priorities. We wanted to make sure that we spoke
18 to your interests, not just tell you what we are
19 doing. So I have crafted this to look at what your
20 interests are and address them accordingly, based on
21 how we vector into what you do.

22 We've read what your priorities and interests
23 are here, and you call for investment in many things.
24 And, really, investments are decisions, decisions that
25 have to be made. And those decisions should be
1 informed by knowledge.

2 We heard Senator Murkowski speak about this.
3 It's not just about the dollars. It's also about the
4 education.

5 The commission knows that knowledge can be
6 co-produced by indigenous and nonindigenous experts.
7 And knowledge comes from a lot of places. It comes

8 from observations, comes from facts, research,
9 hypotheses and models that help explain the
10 observations that enable us to develop forecasts.

11 So I was very pleased today when I heard so
12 many prior speakers talking about research and science
13 and how important it is to many things we do, from
14 Admiral McAllister to Senator Sullivan, who said
15 Alaska can be the place that can be the hub of science
16 and research.

17 Senator Murkowski says you can't get the
18 money until you educate and get the understanding.
19 And Secretary Zinke said, on the basis of science, how
20 would you manage our lands?

21 So I feel, in some ways, the Arctic
22 Commission has succeeded in sharing our mentioning and
23 having it carried by so many others.

24 So the Arctic Research Commission, like my
25 colleague, Mike, is a commission. It's a federal
1 agency. It's an advisory body. We have eight
2 presidentially appointed commissioners. As I
3 mentioned Fran Ulmer is there. There are several
4 other Alaskans on the commission currently, including
5 two Alaska Natives, Mary Pete and Marie Greene.

6 I think it's important to stress a lot of
7 times people hear about researchers and scientists and
8 think of eggheads or people that are only thinking in
9 the clouds or aren't really thinking about kind of the

10 interests of the people in the Arctic. And I hope
11 that you'll be convinced that that's not been the case
12 with the Arctic Research Commission. We have been
13 around for almost 35 years.

14 By law, we have an Alaska Native as one of
15 our commissioners, and oftentimes we've had two Alaska
16 Native commissioners at a time.

17 And I'll just show you quickly some of our
18 prior commissioners. Those are the staff. There's
19 only three civil servants in our entire agency. We
20 have an office in Anchorage and one in D.C.

21 So in the back of the room, we have Richard
22 Glenn who was -- over 20 years was a commissioner with
23 us, on the left there.

24 We have Mary Jane Fate on the right, and her
25 daughter was here. She's the mother-in-law to Senator
1 Sullivan. She was our commissioner for several years.

2 After Mary Jane Fate, we had Vera Metcalf
3 there on the left, who is the Executive Director of
4 the Eskimo Walrus Commission.

5 After Vera, we had Helvi Sandvik, who was CEO
6 of NANA Development Corporation for several years.

7 We also had Edward Itta -- may he rest in
8 peace -- who was an excellent commissioner. He
9 brought a lot of humor and a lot of wisdom. There he
10 is explaining to non-Alaskans where Alaska is and
11 where he lives by using that famous hand example. And

12 he always oftentimes brought his wife Elsie with us.
13 And there they are at a reindeer-processing plant in
14 Finland. We miss him.

15 And we also have had on our commission, and
16 continue to have, these two representatives, Mary Pete
17 and Marie Greene from the NANA region.

18 So we have had a long history of Alaska
19 Natives informing us and educating us and telling what
20 priorities we should focus on when it comes to
21 research and science.

22 For the commission, the area of Alaska that
23 we focus on is the Arctic region, which is north of
24 the Yukon, Porcupine and Kuskokwim Rivers, and
25 includes all of the Bering Sea and includes areas in
1 the north of the Arctic Circle. So it's not the
2 Southeast part of Alaska.

3 By law, the commission has these following
4 duties. We develop policy, we facilitate cooperation
5 within the federal government, we review research
6 programs, we provide recommendations to improve data
7 sharing, and we cooperate with the State of Alaska
8 very closely and internationally.

9 Each year by -- every two years by law, we
10 have to release a report, called the goals and
11 objectives report, to the President and Congress,
12 which gives what the commission recommends to the
13 government, in terms of what it should focus on with

14 respect to research.

15 And I have copies of this report out at the
16 registration desk, along with other paper materials
17 that I'll be talking about today.

18 And the six goals that we have identified in
19 that current goals report -- we're preparing a new one
20 for next year -- are listed here. Broadly speaking,
21 they are focusing on environmental change, human
22 health, energy, with a particular focus on efficiency
23 and renewables.

24 The "built" environment, we've heard a lot
25 about infrastructure, how very important it is to
1 bring engineers and environmental scientists together.

2 Cultures and community resilience is an
3 important one. And international scientific
4 cooperation.

5 In terms of process, the commission informs
6 an interagency group, which then conveys that
7 information to the White House. The law that created
8 us has specific steps where OMB is supposed to
9 coordinate and review budget requests of agencies to
10 see how they link into Arctic research. Congress then
11 authorizes and appropriates.

12 And then interestingly, in the law, it
13 actually gives the commission the power, if you will,
14 to review that request and report to Congress on its
15 adherence to a plan. So it's an interesting process.

16 If you would like to learn more about a lot
17 of the research that we do, please go to this website,
18 which is IARPCcollaborations.org. Anyone in this room
19 can join the discussion to learn more about different
20 collaboration teams that are working on a variety of
21 subjects.

22 Three working groups that the commission
23 works very hard on in the state of Alaska are here,
24 and I have got paper on all of this at the
25 registration desk. The commission decided that three
1 areas were worth us investing a lot of time and effort
2 to convene a dialogue and to get some research
3 priorities on these three topics.

4 These three working groups involve federal
5 representatives, State of Alaska representatives, and
6 from a lot of Alaska Native organizations, like ANTHC
7 and so on. So there's a group on Alaska rural water
8 and sanitation. There's one on mental health,
9 behavioral and mental health and suicidality. And the
10 third one is on renewable energy and energy
11 efficiency. Again, all of this is on our website. I
12 encourage you to check that out.

13 And finally we put out a daily Arctic update
14 newsletter that has a lot of information, trying to
15 just share what we know. And we welcome you to submit
16 comments to us. If you would like us to post your
17 event or information, we'd be happy to do that. We

18 have about 3,000 subscribers. And we're also on
19 Facebook and on Tweet.

1 **MS. VANDERPOOL:** Hello. My name is Angela
2 Janice Vanderpool, and I work for Chugachmiut, which
3 is a tribal health organization in Alaska.

4 And this question is for Mr. O'Rielly of the
5 FCC. About a year ago Chugachmiut put in an
6 application for the subsidy for broadband for our
7 clinics, and ten months later we heard that we would
8 be funded at 85 percent. And since then, there's been
9 some requests that FCC perhaps provide a waiver for
10 Alaskan organizations, because -- you know, to hear
11 ten months later that we're going to have to come up
12 with a significant amount of money to keep our
13 operations as-is, we spent a lot of time building our
14 health-delivery systems around advances in broadband.
15 And it would be a real shame for us to put aside our
16 telehealth carts, to abandon our electronic health
17 records, which we're mandated to provide. And all of
18 this is in the name of patient health, safety and
19 lives. And I'm hoping that FCC will seriously
20 consider that request to provide a waiver for Alaska.

21 **MR. O'RIELLY:** Well, thank you for sharing
22 your story. I'm not familiar with your exact waiver
23 petition, but we do have a number -- we have a
24 quasi-governmental organization that oversees the

25 processing of the materials that are before the
1 commission. It's called USAC. They've had some
2 problems. You probably have been dealing with them, I
3 suspect, and got your answer that -- you're not unlike
4 many people who have gotten an answer that was
5 probably not as thoughtful as it should have been, and
6 more design -- they have had so many problems in the
7 organization, I've sought to root out some of the --
8 some of their -- their operations have been
9 problematic for quite a long time.

10 But to a larger point, I'm cognizant and
11 aware of the need to look at the bigger picture on
12 Alaska, and I will certainly want to follow up with
13 you. And we can see where that waiver petition is in
14 the process.

16

MS. BISSETT: Thanks everyone for being here.

17 My name's Hallie Bissett. I'm with Alaska Native
18 Village Corporation Association.

19 I just wanted to say thank you to Robb Wong
20 for all of the work that you've done in our community
21 in the last couple of years to work with us to really
22 streamline and make efficient the SBA, just like you
23 did with the presentation there. You see a theme
24 going. So just a thank you, I wanted to say.

25 And the question I have, Robb, is: Does the
1 SBA plan to have a tribal coordinator or a Native
2 American, an American Indian coordinator like we have

3 seen in the past with SBA, and why and/or why not?

4 **MR. WONG:** Well, first of all, you're
5 welcome. I hope you know that despite my funny
6 demeanor and my funny appearance, that I do take
7 Alaska very seriously. And you all have been so
8 gracious in spending your time with me and educating
9 me in the short time that I've been here, that I'm
10 just trying to return the same effort and the same
11 seriousness in which you address me. So thank you
12 very much for the opportunity to serve you.

13 The short answer to you is: Yes, I believe
14 so. The tribal representative is not in -- they are
15 physically in my office, sharing office space, but
16 that goes under a person Allen Gutierrez, who I deal
17 with almost every day. And I know that he takes it
18 very seriously, and I believe that he is searching for
19 someone.

20 To that point also, as you know, we are
21 having a tribal consultation on May 9th in Anchorage.
22 So whether we have a representative or not, I will be
23 there with John Klein; Allen Gutierrez, who runs that
24 office; and also the regulatory official, Nate Miller.
25 So we're all going to be up there on May 9th.

1 So if you have ways that you think you would
2 like to -- you know, things that we're not doing now
3 that you would like us to advocate for or to work for,
4 please let us know.

7 **MS. BAHNKE:** Thank you. Good afternoon,
8 distinguished gentlemen. I'm Melanie Bahnke. I
9 represent Kawerak, which is a tribal consortium in the
10 Bering Strait region of Alaska, the chokepoint through
11 the Northwest Arctic Passage.

12 As the Arctic -- the interest in the Arctic
13 heightens, we're seeing a lot more researchers coming
14 into our neck of the woods.

15 And my first comment is to Mr. Kennedy, with
16 NOAA. Last week, NOAA had a research vehicle near
17 St. Lawrence Island. And we're right in the middle of
18 our spring walrus hunting and whaling. And one of our
19 esteemed elder hunters communicated, asking NOAA to
20 please move because, like I said, we don't time when
21 the animals come. They don't have a year-in-advance
22 notice to us of when they're going to show up so that
23 we can harvest them.

24 And the response, I think, could have been a
25 little bit better. The response was along the lines
1 of: Our research is being done to protect your
2 subsistence activities.

3 And we appreciate the research. We know
4 there's a lot of research that needs to be done, and
5 we welcome it. But we ask that you coordinate with us
6 in realtime.

7 I know your research activities are planned
8 well in advance. But like I said, we don't get to --

9 the animals don't necessarily follow a calendar, and
10 our ability to harvest them is really important for
11 us.

12 So I ask that you coordinate with the local
13 tribes or tribal organizations like Kawerak as you're
14 conducting your research.

15 That leads into a comment to Dr. Farrell.
16 Thank you for all of the research that the U.S. Arctic
17 Research Commission does. We're grateful for that.

18 As you update your 2011, I believe it is, you
19 said your Arctic strategy -- well, actually that's
20 NOAA that's doing that. So my comment is to
21 Mr. Kennedy and to Dr. Farrell as well. It would be
22 great if tribes could be provided some resources to
23 develop tribal protocols around research. A lot of
24 times we're provided with plans or strategies to
25 comment on after the fact via tribal consultation, but
1 we'd like to be part of that conversation and develop
2 those agendas, especially for Arctic research and our
3 priorities.

4 I think it would be great if we could
5 collaborate and not just comment on your plans and
6 strategies after the fact. So some resources to help
7 us develop our tribal protocols would be great. We're
8 not just getting researchers from the U.S. We're
9 seeing Chinese vessels and other foreign-flagged
10 researchers that are coming into our neck of the

11 woods.

13 **MR. KENNEDY:** I'd like to at least respond to
14 the first issue you brought up. One of the things I
15 was going to mention, but felt like I ought to wait is
16 the agreement standard of care that NOAA's been
17 involved in and trying to put together with
18 subsistence communities and other federal agencies.

19 And although I have not been directly
20 involved in the discussions around the issue that
21 you're talking about, from what I have been involved,
22 I think the research was planned, yes, quite some time
23 ago around where they thought historically the ice
24 would be. Turns out the ice wasn't there. The ice
25 had moved dramatically north, much more than any of us
1 guessed. And as a result, we moved north to be where
2 the seals were, seal study.

3 But we have said that we want to honor the
4 standard of care agreement, and I think this was an
5 unfortunate one that got away from us. And we
6 certainly have had a very detailed discussion within
7 NOAA about how we could correct, when we do have a
8 major change in our research mission, trying to get
9 ahead of notifying the appropriate folks. And that
10 didn't happen in this case. And I think there's some
11 real regret that that's the way it went, and we are
12 trying to correct that.

15 **DR. FARRELL:** Only in terms of the protocols
16 may be -- may not be exactly what you're looking for,
17 but there is a move afoot to revise the principles for
18 the conduct of Arctic research that's being initiated
19 by the National Science Foundation and the
20 interagency, where they are engaging regarding
21 protocols for research and constructive co-production
22 of knowledge with the indigenous groups.

23 So there's a Federal Register notice about
24 that, and I could easily provide you at least more
25 information to make contacts with the group that is
1 revising that document.

5 **MS. KITKA:** I just want to follow up a
6 little bit with Mr. O'Rielly about the healthcare
7 disparity. And so in 1997, the FCC capped the RAC at
8 400 million. The assumptions behind the reason for
9 the cap are now 20 years outdated.

10 In 2016, for the first time, the cap is
11 reached. And now applicants' co-pay was raised from
12 1 percent to 7.5 percent. That might not sound like
13 much, but in Alaska for fiscal year 2017, that
14 increase amounts to 11 million.

15 For 2018, we expect the Alaska Tribal Health
16 System obligation to be over 35 million from the 2015
17 obligation. The IHS funding is shortfalled at
18 30 billion a year across the nation.

19 So I just want to reemphasize, you know, how
20 far we are behind in the funding. And so I'm just
21 hoping, you know, that there would be some kind of
22 commitment to helping the healthcare system in Alaska.
23 Thank you.

24 **MR. O'RIELLY:** So you have my commitment that
25 I'm going to work to protect the good work that has
1 happened in Alaska under the program that is worth
2 only so many things. Like I said, there's five of us,
3 and I don't always win that point.

4 But I am -- and you can see my statement on
5 this particular issue when we looked at the budget.
6 There have been calls to double the budget. There
7 have been calls to shift money away from Alaska. And
8 I fought to make sure that that -- that the
9 commitments that were previously made and the good
10 work that is done -- because if you look at the
11 difference -- and I kind of talked about this, and I
12 think we talked prior, you know, the work that's done
13 in Alaska is somewhat basic communications that's
14 absolutely necessary.

15 You see in the rest of the nation it's some
16 really fancy high-end equipment. It's very important
17 as well, but, you know, in many instances -- and the
18 carts that I saw were in very remote areas, very
19 remote communities that had nothing else. That was
20 the center point of healthcare, and there was no other

21 doctor. It wasn't about high-end x-ray, you know, and
22 high-end tests. It was about basic care and critical
23 needs that -- and emergencies, and trying to figure
24 out if you had to get somebody out, and could you get
25 somebody out to either Anchorage or the regional
1 hospital or had to get Seattle, if need be.

2 So I'm very aware of this. My first -- one
3 of my first blogs that I wrote on the topic as a
4 commissioner was on what I was calling triage carts.
5 And I think they're so important.

6 So I'll be -- you've got my commitment on
7 that issue. I want to see where it goes through on --
8 with the rest of my colleagues.

12 MS. KITKA:

13 One, we wanted to thank the five
14 representatives for, one, your patience sitting
15 through the daylong session and being the tail-end
16 panel on that. That's not easy.

17 I'd like to invite you up to our convention
18 in October, if your schedule allows. And we'll be
19 getting invitations on that.

20 But I know that people really have a deep
21 interest in the areas that you're working on, and
22 maybe we just don't have enough time during
23 this program on that. But if we could work up some
24 workshops during the convention, and so we can get
25 more critical mass on the areas that you're working on
1 on that -- just expect an invitation. Whether or not

2 it's you, or one of your colleagues would be the more
3 appropriate person, you let us know. But I do want to
4 thank you on behalf of everybody, because we do
5 appreciate your work. Thank you.

7 **MR. PANAMAROFF:** Okay. That concludes this
8 panel. Thank you, panelists. And also hope to see
9 you at the reception this evening. Thank you. Turn
10 it back to Julie.

12 **MS. KITKA:** Thank you, Tom. As you know,
13 we're coming towards the end of today's session on
14 that. I want to express our appreciation to our
15 partners that helped put this together, and in
16 particular, Alaska Command and General Hummel and the
17 Coast Guard. Really commend them for sticking with us
18 today, but really the work that they have done in the
19 meetings ahead of time and helping put this on
20 together.

21 Appreciate the support of the Congressional
22 Delegation. A lot of the Congressional staff helped
23 make phone calls to people and help brainstorm. And
24 they're right with us on following this up and trying
25 to see that this is really practical, and we can make
1 things happen.

2 Apologies on behalf of the Governor and
3 Lieutenant Governor. Yesterday was the last day of
4 the regular session, so they had to be there to close

5 out that session and decide if they're going to be
6 calling a special session or not. But they really
7 both wanted to be here, which is too bad.

8 Also a big thank you to Secretary of Interior
9 Zinke. I know that he was really wanting to have us
10 over at the department in January, and was extremely
11 disappointed that the government was shut down and we
12 couldn't have all our meetings.

13 In fact, his staff were just counting, you
14 know, on their hands how many people that they wanted
15 to grab from this audience into their own agency
16 meetings to continue discussions.

17 Assistant Secretary Joe Balash was very --
18 very extremely disappointed because his swearing-in
19 ceremony was going to happen right before we started
20 our conference on that.

21 So I think it was a real treat having the OMB
22 director here, so I think we'll look to see him coming
23 up to Alaska or involved in things, and really
24 appreciate -- I mean, I couldn't believe his sense of
25 humor. That was not expected for an OMB director on
1 that.

7 And, again, thank you, everybody, for your
8 time and all your efforts.