



CENTRAL COUNCIL
Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

Office of the President • Edward K. Thomas Building
P.O. Box 25500 • Juneau, Alaska 99802

June 19, 2024

Anne Marie Eich
Assistant Regional Administrator, Protected Resources Division
Alaska Region, NMFS
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, AK 99802

Re: Request for Government-to-Government Consultation on the Status Review of Gulf of Alaska Chinook Salmon

Dear Ms. Eich,

On behalf of the Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida), I am writing in response to the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) 90-day finding on the petition to list Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Chinook salmon as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (Docket No. NOAA-NMFS-2024-0042).

As federally recognized tribal government, we emphasize the importance of the federal government's trust responsibility to tribal nations. In light of this, we formally request a government-to-government consultation regarding this petition and its potential implications on our tribal resources and traditional ways of life. Additionally, we request a separate comment period specifically for tribal governments, distinct from the public comment period. This will ensure that our unique perspectives and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) are adequately considered and incorporated into your findings.

The GOA Chinook salmon is not only a critical resource for our subsistence, cultural, and economic needs but also a vital component of our traditional ecological knowledge systems. Our ancestors have stewarded these resources for millennia, and our insights can greatly contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the species' current status and the environmental factors affecting its well-being.

We believe that incorporating TEK into the status review process is essential for achieving a holistic and effective stewardship strategy. Our traditional knowledge provides a long-term perspective on ecological changes, species behavior, and environmental health that is invaluable for informing sustainable management practices.

We appreciate NMFS's efforts to engage with various stakeholders in this review process and urge you to honor the federal trust responsibility by facilitating direct and meaningful consultation with tribal governments impacted. We are committed to working collaboratively with NMFS to ensure that the measures taken are culturally appropriate, scientifically sound, and respectful of our tribal sovereignty and traditional practices.

Please confirm receipt of this letter and provide us with the proposed dates for the consultation and details regarding the separate comment period for tribal governments.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to your prompt response and to working together to protect the Gulf of Alaska Chinook salmon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard J. Peterson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Richard J. Peterson,
President

Cc:

Julie Scheurer, NMFS Alaska Region

Heather Austin, NMFS Office of Protected Resources