

March 18, 2019

Representative Louise Stutes, Chair
Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Chuck Kopp
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Representative Geran Tarr
Representative Sarah Vance
Representative Lance Pruitt

Dear Chair Stutes and members of the House Special Committee on Fisheries:

It has come to our attention that the PCNs and funding for the Director of the Division of Subsistence and the Director of the Division of Habitat in the Department of Fish and Game will be moved to the Office of Management and Budget in the governor's proposed FY 20 operating budget. Koniag opposes this action.

As stated on its website, "The mission of the Division of Subsistence is to scientifically gather, quantify, evaluate and report information about customary and traditional uses of Alaska's fish and wildlife resources." In following its mission, the Division of Subsistence conducts the state's most robust research on customary and traditional uses of fish and wildlife in the State of Alaska. This research is utilized in the development of management plans at the Department of Fish & Game as well as at both the Board of Fisheries and the Board of Game. In addition, data and information generated by the division is disseminated to the public and organizations. The lack of a director leaves the division without leadership, direction and filled with uncertainty.

As stated on its website, the mission of the Division of Habitat is, "Protect Alaska's valuable fish and wildlife resources and their habitats as Alaska's population and economy continue to expand." The division reviews applications, issues permits and monitors activities in waters that contain fish. In addition, the division maintains and updates the "Catalog of Waters Important for Spawning, Rearing, or Migration of Anadromous Fishes." Among other things, the division also reviews proposed timber harvest activities and works with timber operators on their field activities and reviews development projects such as hard rock mining, oil and gas and hydroelectric that are authorized under other agencies' authorities. Koniag is involved in both timber harvesting and hard rock (granite) mining on its lands and has worked with the Division of Habitat on these activities over the years. We appreciate the division's role and cooperative approach as we have developed our resources. Like the Division of Subsistence, the lack of a director also leaves this division without leadership, direction and filled with uncertainty.

koniag.com

P (907) 561-2668

F (907) 562-5258



3800 Centerpoint Drive
Suite 502
Anchorage, AK 99503

This proposal fails to identify what need there is at OMB that supersedes the importance of these two divisions. This proposal does not assist with the efforts by the governor and legislature to close the fiscal gap and further consolidates departmental functions in OMB while sending the message that the Division of Subsistence and the Division of Habitat are not important functions of the state.

Both divisions provide a vital function for the State of Alaska and service to the public. We have not heard of a plan for the divisions without leadership nor have we heard what the PCN's and funding for them will be used for within OMB. Therefore, Koniag encourages you to not only seek more information on this proposal, but also insure that the positions and funding for the Director of the Division of Subsistence and the Director of the Division of Habitat are maintained in the Department of Fish & Game and not moved to the Office of Management & Budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Hegna", is positioned above the printed name.

Shauna Hegna
President