



CENTRAL COUNCIL

Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

Edward K. Thomas Building

9097 Glacier Highway • Juneau, Alaska 99801-6922

April 7, 2015

To: Chair of House Fisheries Committee
Representative Louise Stutes
State Capitol
Juneau AK, 99801

Re: HB 179- Meal Program Donations; Fish and Game

Dear members of the House Fisheries Committee,

Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Central Council) is the State's largest federally recognized tribe, representing almost 30,000 tribal citizens worldwide. Central Council has many political priorities and provides numerous client services, but our children and elderly are of the utmost importance to our Tribe and tribal citizens. Our people have consumed traditional foods for thousands of years before statehood. The foods provided in public schools, medical facilities, senior centers, and child care facilities use low quality processed foods. The high costs of energy and transportation in rural Alaska also contributes to the complications surrounding the regulation restricting traditional food donations to public facilities.

The ability for elders to continue to eat the traditional foods they've eaten their whole lives while living in assisted living homes is a very important issue to our tribal citizens. Our people have provided for our elderly since time immemorial. The inability for assisted living homes to receive and distribute our subsistence donations causes a serious detriment to our elderly connecting to their land, communities, and families.

We also prioritize our youth growing up consuming the traditional foods that our ancestors survived on. School lunches are not known for its health benefits or appetizing qualities; being able to donate traditional fish and game would be beneficial to all students. The appreciation we have to our land is directly related to consuming the fish and game that the land provides. Our past generations were raised on traditional foods, and it is important to Central Council that our youth continue our cultural traditions in order to revitalize our cultural knowledge.

We urge all State representatives to sincerely consider this bill. Central Council believes that this bill would benefit all Alaskan children, elders, and other residents who consume food provided by public facilities. Alaska's youth and elderly deserve

high quality nutrition rich foods, and HB 179 fixes the regulation that prohibits community members from donating subsistence harvests to public facilities. As the State faces significant budget shortfalls, representatives need to take advantage of opportunities to save money while providing a much-needed service.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Peterson
President