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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
Public Hearing Webinar re:
Kenai National Wildlife Refuge
Proposed Rule Changes to Public Use

Date: October 27, 2020

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Transcribed by:
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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (On record)

3 **AMANDA BIEDERMANN, FACILITATOR:** Hello, everyone. We're
4 going to go ahead and get started with our meeting today. My
5 name is Amanda Biedermann, and I'm going to be one of your
6 meeting facilitators today. Additionally, I have several
7 members of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with me on the
8 meeting today, including Stephen Miller, the deputy refuge
9 manager, along with Stephanie Brady, Ella Wagener, and Andrea
10 Medeiros.

11 I'm now going to go over some ground rules for the
12 meeting today. First, your microphones and videos will be
13 turned off for the duration of today's presentation. You will
14 only be unmuted if and when I unmute you during the public
15 comment portion of this meeting.

16 Second, this meeting is being recorded as part of the
17 project record, and a transcript of the meeting will be posted
18 to the website. Additionally, all materials presented today
19 will be provided online through the website.

20 After the presentation, we will then move on to the
21 public comment portion of the meeting, during which we will
22 accept verbal public comments from participants. As you saw in
23 your confirmation e-mail, we will be accepting public comments
24 today only from the first 75 registrants who selected that they
25 wanted to offer a comment when they registered for today's

1 meeting. If you are one of those registrants, you received a
2 separate e-mail stating that you would be called on during
3 today's meeting.

4 If you did not get the opportunity to offer a comment
5 today, where public comments can also be submitted via mail or
6 regulations.gov. And we will provide further information on
7 how to submit your written comments later after the
8 presentation.

9 Comments today will be limited today to two minutes per
10 participant in order to allow everyone who is on the commenter
11 list the opportunity to offer a comment today. We ask that you
12 be mindful and respectful of this time limit.

13 I will now turn it over to Stephen Miller to lead us
14 through the main part of the presentation for the proposed
15 rule.

16 **STEPHEN MILLER, KENAI DEPUTY REFUGE MANAGER:** Okay, thank
17 you, Amanda. Welcome to -- everyone, to the U.S. Fish and
18 Wildlife Service's public hearing webinar on the proposed rule
19 for Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. You -- thank you for your
20 participation today.

21 As Amanda said, I'm Steve Miller. I'm the deputy refuge
22 manager here at Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. So, this
23 afternoon, we will be holding a public hearing to receive
24 comment on a proposed rule which would amend certain public use
25 regulations on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge and its

1 associated environmental assessment.

2 Prior to taking your testimony, I'll be presenting a
3 brief overview of the refuge and the proposed rule. We will
4 not be taking questions during the hearing. Rather, it is an
5 opportunity for all of you to provide comment. Once again,
6 thank you for your participation today.

7 Next slide, Amanda. The Kenai National Wildlife Refuge
8 was originally established as the Kenai National Moose Range
9 through an executive order by President Franklin Delano
10 Roosevelt in December of 1941. Quoting from this executive
11 order, the moose range was established primarily to protect the
12 natural breeding range and feeding range of the giant Kenai
13 moose on the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska.

14 In 1980, under the Alaska National Interest Lands
15 Conservation Act or ANILCA, the moose range was renamed the
16 Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. Additional lands were added to
17 the refuge, and its establishment purposes were expanded to
18 include the following: To conserve fish and wildlife
19 populations and habitats in their natural -- natural
20 diversity, including, but not limited to, moose, bear, mountain
21 goats, Dall sheep, wolves, other fur bearers, salmonids and
22 other fish, waterfowl and other migratory and non-migratory
23 birds.

24 Next was to fulfill the international treaty obligations
25 of the United States with respect to fish and wildlife in their

1 habitats, and also to ensure the ma -- to the maximum extent
2 practicable and in a manner consistent with the purposes above,
3 water quality and necessary water quantity.

4 Next, to provide, in a manner consistent with its
5 conservation purposes, opportunities for scientific research,
6 interpretation, environmental education, and land management
7 training. And, finally, to provide, in a manner compatible
8 with all of these purposes, opportunities for fish and wildlife
9 oriented recreation.

10 ANILCA also established the Kenai wilderness within the
11 refuge to be managed under the Wilderness Act of 1964 as a unit
12 of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Wilderness
13 Act's purposes are to secure an enduring resource of
14 wilderness, to protect and preserve the wilderness character of
15 designated wilderness areas, and to administer this wilderness
16 system for the use and enjoyment of the American people in a
17 way that will leave them unimpaired for future use and
18 enjoyment as wilderness.

19 Under ANILCA, all federal conservation system units in
20 Alaska, including Kenai Refuge, must provide opportunities for
21 subsistence by rural Alaska residents. The refuge is
22 administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, an agency
23 in the U.S. Department of the Interior, as part of the National
24 Wildlife Refuge system.

25 Next slide, please, Amanda. The Kenai National Wildlife

1 Refuge is located on the Kenai Peninsula in Southcentral
2 Alaska. The refuge now encompasses roughly 1.98 million acres
3 of which over 60 percent or 1.3 million acres is
4 congressionally designated as the Kenai Wilderness.

5 Habitats within the refuge are diverse. They include ice
6 field, glaciers, alpine tundra and subalpine brush at higher
7 elevations, and boreal forest and coastal estuaries at lower
8 elevations. The refuge encompasses a substantial portion of
9 the Kenai River watershed and includes extensive wetlands.

10 This variety of habitat supports diverse fish, wildlife,
11 and plant assemblages, including all five species of Pacific
12 salmon, moose, caribou, Dall sheep, and mountain goats, brown
13 and black bears, wolves, lynx, and other fur bearers, Trumpeter
14 swans and song birds.

15 The Kenai Refuge in Alaska is Alaska's most visited
16 national wildlife refuge, typically hosting over one million
17 visits annually. The refuge provides opportunity for all six
18 of the national wildlife refuge systems priority public uses,
19 hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography,
20 environmental education and interpretation.

21 Next slide, please, Amanda. The public hearing and the
22 reopening of the comment period is to allow additional
23 opportunity for the public to provide comment on a proposed
24 rule which would amend existing public use regulations on Kenai
25 National Wildlife Refuge found in Chapter 50 of the Code of

1 Federal Regulations, Part 36.

2 The proposed rule's regulatory changes would eliminate
3 the current requirement for the public to obtain a refuge
4 trapping permit, allow for harvesting brown bears at registered
5 bait stations, allow the discharge of firearms along the
6 Russian and Kenai Rivers at certain times of the year, allow
7 bicycle and game cart use on certain designated trails and
8 rights-of-way, and allow all-terrain and utility vehicles and
9 snowmachines to access designated lakes for ice fishing.

10 Next slide, please, Amanda. The purpose of this proposed
11 rule is to align public use regulations on Kenai National
12 Wildlife Refuge with State of Alaska regulations to the extent
13 practicable and consistent with federal law, enhance
14 consistency with harvest regulations on surrounding non-federal
15 lands and waters, and increase access to federal lands in
16 furtherance of Secretarial Orders 3347 and 3356.

17 Next slide, please, Amanda. The Kenai Refuge proposed
18 rule and accompanying environmental assessment were initially
19 published in the federal register on June 11, 2020, with a
20 60-day public comment period which ended August 10th, 2020.
21 The Service received over 34,000 comments on the proposed rule
22 at that time, including several requests for both extension of
23 the comment period and a public hearing.

24 Holding a public hearing upon request is required by
25 federal regulation in determining whether to open an area to

1 public use or activity otherwise prohibited. The Service,
2 therefore, published a notice in the federal register reopening
3 the public comment period for 30 days on October 9th. The
4 current comment period will run through November 9th, 2020.

5 Next slide, please, Amanda. Before we begin the hearing,
6 I want to point out there is more information, including a link
7 to the federal register on the refuge website shown here.
8 Again, comments will be accepted through November 9th and may
9 be submitted by mail to the address listed or online by going
10 to regulations.gov and searching for the docket number that's
11 listed there at the bottom of your screen. Again, this slide
12 will be put up towards the end for folks that are wanting
13 to -- a little bit more time to write these down.

14 We will consider information and recommendations received
15 during the original comment period, as well as those received
16 during this reopen comment period.

17 There isn't a need to resubmit comments previously
18 submitted. The Service will fully consider all comments in
19 preparation of its final determination.

20 Next slide, please, Amanda. Again, I'd like to thank you
21 for participating in this virtual public hearing and for your
22 interest in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge.

23 Next, a representative from Environmental Management and
24 Planning Solutions, Incorporated, will be providing you with
25 logistical information on today's hearing and instructions on

1 how to participate. It's back to you, Amanda.

2 **AMANDA BIEDERMANN, FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Stephen.

3 Hello, everyone. Again, as Stephen just said, my name is
4 Amanda Biedermann, and I'm going to be one of your facilitators
5 for the public comment portion of the meeting today, along with
6 Amy Lewis, who will be moderating commenters today.

7 We are now officially going to start the public comment
8 portion of the meeting to receive comments related to the
9 proposed rule. It is about 4:15 Alaska time, so let's get
10 started.

11 Again, this portion of the meeting, along with your
12 comments, is being recorded as part of the official record. As
13 a reminder, your camera and mic control settings are restricted
14 during this time. You will only be able to talk if and when
15 you are unmuted, so please remember to speak when prompted.

16 I'm now going to read through instructions for those
17 first 76 participants who indicated that they wanted to offer a
18 comment when they preregistered during today's meeting. We
19 have a list of these participants. This list is organized in
20 the order that people registered for the meeting. If you are
21 on this list, when it is your turn to comment, we will read
22 your name aloud from this list and display your name on the
23 next screen.

24 When you hear your name called out, please use the
25 raise-hand feature so that we know you are available and ready

1 to offer your comment. We will also display the name of the
2 commenter who is next in line to comment.

3 You can access the raised-hand feature by going to the
4 participants' list at the bottom of your Zoom screen, and then
5 selecting the raise-hand feature at the bottom of the
6 participants' list. You may need to exit your full screen view
7 of Zoom in order to see the participants' list icon at the
8 bottom of your Zoom screen, or, if you are calling in through
9 the phone today, please press star-9 on your keypad to raise
10 your hand. If you're having issues with the raise-hand
11 feature, please chat to Clayton McGee when your name is called.

12 Once you have raised your hand, you will be unmuted so
13 that you can provide your comment. You may be double-muted, so
14 if that is the case, we will prompt you to unmute yourself on
15 your end so that we can hear you. Please spell out your first
16 and last name for the record before providing your comment.
17 And if you are representing an organization or group today,
18 please say so.

19 As I mentioned earlier, each commenter will have two
20 minutes to offer their comment. There will be a stopwatch on
21 the next screen with a two-minute countdown timer. You will
22 also receive a 30-second verbal warning to let you know how
23 much time you have left to comment. Again, we ask that you be
24 mindful and respectful of this time limit today in order to
25 allow others the opportunity to offer their comment as well.

1 After you have provided your comment, we will put you
2 back on mute and move onto the next commenter. If you do not
3 feel that you were able to complete your comment within the
4 two-minute time limit, the Fish and Wildlife Service strongly
5 encourages you to submit the remainder of your comment in
6 writing.

7 As you can see on this screen, these are first 76
8 commenters who signed up for today's meeting. And I would like
9 to clarify for everyone today, that if you are not on this
10 list, if we have gone through this list and we still have time
11 before 9:00 o'clock p.m., Alaska time, we will open up the
12 meeting to anybody who would like to offer a comment if we do
13 have time remaining.

14 So I do want to stress, if you're not on this list and we
15 do have time remaining, we will then open it up to everyone
16 who's on the meeting today who hasn't had a chance to offer a
17 comment. And, again, you will have that two minutes to offer
18 your comment.

19 As you -- some of you saw from your confirmation e-mail
20 that you received earlier today, we will go on a first-come,
21 first-serve basis. So after we have reached the end of these
22 76 commenters, whoever has raised their hand, we will just try
23 to go as best we can in that order, and receive as many
24 comments as we can before 9:00 o'clock p.m. Alaska time. So I
25 hope that clears up things for everyone today.

1 I'm going to give everybody a few minutes to look over
2 the list and see where they're at in the list of commenters so
3 that you can have a good idea of when you're up for comment,
4 and so that you can prepare yourself accordingly.

5 (Pause)

6 And, again, these are the first 76 commenters who signed
7 up for today's meeting, but we will open up the entire public
8 comment portion of this meeting to everybody who is on the
9 meeting, and we will accept as many comments as we can from
10 registrants until 9:00 o'clock p.m. Alaska time. And I'll give
11 folks just a few more minutes here to look over this list and
12 find their names.

13 (Pause)

14 All right, I'm now going to turn it over to Amy Lewis who
15 is going to go to our first participant today who will offer a
16 comment.

17 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Okay, good evening, everyone.
18 My name is Amy Lewis, and I'm going to be moderating your
19 comment period tonight. So the first commenter we have on the
20 list is Doug Vincent-Lang. Doug, I see you have your hand
21 raised. I am going to unmute you. Hello, Doug.

22 **DOUG VINCENT-LANG, COMMENTER:** Hi, can you hear me?

23 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** I can. Could you please
24 spell out your first and last name for the record? And then
25 after you do that, pause and then we will start -- I'll let you

1 know and you can start your comments.

2 **DOUG VINCENT-LANG, COMMENTER:** Okay. Doug Vincent-Lang,
3 D-o-u-g space Vincent, V-i-n-c-e-n-t hyphen L-a-n-g, and I'm
4 the commissioner for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

5 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great, thank you, sir. Okay,
6 I will start your two-minute timer now.

7 **DOUG VINCENT-LANG, COMMENTER:** ADF&G supports this
8 proposed rule and its affirmation of the state's broad trustee
9 and police powers of fish and wildlife species on public lands
10 and waters, under the jurisdiction of the Department of
11 Interior, including the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, as
12 intended by congress, the Alaska Statehood Act, and ANILCA.

13 We are aware of ANILCA's mandated responsibilities for
14 refuges, and provide the best available science, informed
15 management decisions, and carefully manage wildlife
16 accordingly. Sound biological justification is the foundation
17 of our sustained yield management.

18 In passing ANILCA, congress intended for federal land
19 managers to manage Alaskan refuges, including designated
20 wilderness, differently than it's done elsewhere in the
21 country. We are particularly concerned that the majority of
22 public attention on this and the previous 2016 rule making
23 focuses on certain hunting and trapping methods and means
24 without a full understanding of the basis for the State Board
25 of Game's decisions, the science supporting those decisions, or

1 who would be affected by the regulatory changes.

2 The underlying issue resolves around the framework of
3 wildlife management, sustained yield of wildlife, and mandated
4 public use in Alaska, which had been in place since ANILCA's
5 passage in 1980, but were initially upended by the
6 August 5th, 2016 final rule for the National Wildlife Refuges
7 in Alaska, and perpetuated (ph) by the May 5th, 2016 final rule
8 for the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge.

9 The state has a long and distinguished history of
10 excellent wildlife management, which the proposed changes will
11 allow to continue. We encourage the Service to discuss any
12 wildlife related biological or conservation concerns with the
13 Department of Fish and Game.

14 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

15 **DOUG VINCENT-LANG, COMMENTER:** We believe that many
16 issues can be resolved through ongoing cooperative efforts. We
17 appreciate the work the Service has done to seek alignment with
18 applicable law. This said, we ask that the Service consider
19 modifications, as described in our written comments, to comply
20 with the intent of congress and recent public law relating to
21 this rule making, and follow through with the Service's
22 commitment noted in this rule to use the State of Alaska's
23 regulatory processes to the maximum extent allowed by federal
24 law. This would ensure full compliance with the orders issued
25 by the Secretary of Interior and the president. Thank you for

1 your full consideration of the department's comments.

2 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Doug. I'm going
3 to put you back on mute and lower your hand.

4 Okay, I'm going to move on to our next commenter,
5 number 2, Jeremy Clare. Jeremy, I see you have your hand
6 raised. I am going to unmute you. Hi, Jeremy.

7 **JEREMY CLARE, COMMENTER:** Hello.

8 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Hi. Could you please spell
9 out your first and last name for the record?

10 **JEREMY CLARE, COMMENTER:** Jeremy Clare, J-e-r-e-m-y
11 C-l-a-r-e, and I represent Safari Club International.

12 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Excellent. Thank you very
13 much. I'm going to start your two-minute timer now.

14 **JEREMY CLARE, COMMENTER:** (Indiscernible portions below
15 due to audio cutting out) I listened to the comments provided
16 (indiscernible) today. Many commenters opposed the proposal to
17 allow the harvest of brown bears over bait. I would
18 (indiscernible) respond to those comments.

19 The use of bait for hunting is not unethical or
20 antithetical for purposes of the refuge. Congress directed the
21 Service to provide opportunities for wildlife (indiscernible)
22 recreation, like hunting, as a purpose of the refuge. Baiting
23 is used as a harvest (indiscernible) for bears and plenty of
24 other species in Alaska, the Lower 48 states, and around the
25 world. In fact, bear baiting is allowed on other refuges in

1 Alaska.

2 Baiting allows hunters to observe bears (indiscernible)
3 shooting, which allows hunters greater selectivity in
4 harvesting a bear, and can reduce the harvest of
5 (indiscernible). Youth hunters at bait stations are also given
6 a safe opportunity to observe bears, (indiscernible) the subtle
7 differences between sows and boars.

8 Lastly, bait stations allow for clean (indiscernible),
9 where it is relatively free of trees and branches. In 2012 and
10 '13, the (indiscernible) adopted hunting regulatory changes,
11 including increasing the harvest cap and allowing the
12 (indiscernible) brown bears at registered bait stations. The
13 goal was to reduce the Kenai Peninsula brown (indiscernible)
14 population and stabilize it at a lower level. This was done
15 primarily to address (indiscernible) human bear conflicts.

16 In 2015, after the bear population stabilized, it lowered
17 the harvest cap, and the state continues to closely monitor the
18 overall harvest and population numbers of the brown bears.

19 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

20 **JEREMY CLARE, COMMENTER:** Allowing the use of bait on the
21 refuge will not increase or decrease the state's set harvest
22 limits, so neither more nor fewer bears will be harvested if
23 baiting is allowed. Safari Club supports the proposed rule
24 (indiscernible) it properly defers to the state's regulation of
25 the method of take of brown bear, and will align federal

1 regulations. Thank you.

2 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you very much, Jeremy.
3 I'm going to put you back on mute, and I'm going to lower your
4 hand.

5 And I'm going to move to our next commenter, number 3,
6 Nancy Bale. Nancy, I see you have your hand raised. I'm going
7 to unmute you. Hi, Nancy.

8 **NANCY BALE, COMMENTER:** Hello. Can you hear me?

9 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** I can. Please spell --

10 **NANCY BALE, COMMENTER:** Thank you.

11 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** -- out your first and last
12 name for the record.

13 **NANCY BALE, COMMENTER:** Nancy, N-a-n-c-y, Bale, B-a-l-e.

14 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, I will
15 start your two-minute timer now.

16 **NANCY BALE, COMMENTER:** Thank you very much. My name is
17 Nancy Bale, and I'm testifying from Anchorage, Alaska. I'm a
18 long-term, almost 50-year resident of Alaska. Thanks for the
19 opportunity to submit comments on this proposed rule making,
20 and for providing the additional opportunity of a public
21 hearing.

22 I've lived in Alaska since 1971, and have hunted and
23 fished in Alaska, lived in the bush, and led the lifestyle many
24 Alaskans have led. I regularly attend and pay attention to
25 Alaska Board of Game meetings.

1 Throughout my long residence in Alaska, I've come to
2 appreciate the federal presence, and the many acres of
3 conservation system units established under ANILCA. The
4 wildlife refuges and national parks set a tone for wildlife
5 management, and in addition, provide recreational
6 opportunities for local, national, and international citizens,
7 significantly bolstering the economy.

8 That said, I oppose promulgation of this new rule. The
9 rule is poorly justified, not needed, and if promulgated, will
10 be damaging to purposes of the refuge. For example, the
11 purpose and need for this change is insufficient. In the draft
12 EA, the use of secretarial orders 3347 and 56 as the chief
13 underpinning, is legally inappropriate.

14 Second, neither the proposed regulation nor the draft EA
15 has shown that there is a deficiency in recreational
16 opportunity on the refuge currently. While existing --

17 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

18 **NANCY BALE, COMMENTER:** -- regulation of trapping and
19 prohibition of brown bear baiting does not comport with state
20 regs, there's a great deal of recreational use on the refuge
21 that does comport. Recreational access is adequate. See
22 page 23 of the EA, which describes current recreational access
23 in detail.

24 Whatever recreational access is continued needs to
25 comport with the purposes of the refuge. This rule does not,

1 and I urge that you reject it. And thanks for the opportunity
2 to comment.

3 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you very much, Nancy.
4 I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your hand.

5 Okay, I'm going to move to next commenter number 4,
6 Samantha Hagio. Apologies if I messed up your name. I'm going
7 to put you on unmute. Hi, Samantha.

8 **SAMANTHA HAGIO, COMMENTER:** Hello.

9 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Okay.

10 **SAMANTHA HAGIO, COMMENTER:** You are probably the only
11 person that has ever pronounced it correctly.

12 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Gold star for me. Okay,
13 could you please spell your first and last name for the record?

14 **SAMANTHA HAGIO, COMMENTER:** Yes, it's S-a-m-a-n-t-h-a
15 H-a-g-i-o, and I'm speaking on behalf of the Humane Society of
16 the United States and the Human Society Legislative Fund.

17 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Excellent. Thank you very
18 much. All right, I am going to start your two-minute timer
19 now.

20 **SAMANTHA HAGIO, COMMENTER:** Okay, thanks. On behalf of
21 the Humane Society of the United States and the Humane Society
22 Legislative Fund, and our members and supporters in Alaska and
23 across the country, I respectfully offer comments in strong
24 opposition to the proposed rule, specifically, the portions of
25 the rule that would allow unprecedented brown bear baiting and

1 would remove the critical requirement of obtaining a federal
2 permit to trap wildlife on the refuge.

3 These practices, including habituating brown bears to
4 smelly bait piles, and allowing target and nontarget animals
5 alike to suffer needlessly and die slow and painful deaths in
6 cruel traps, are not only inhumane and unsporting, but are
7 entirely contrary to good science and the purpose of the
8 refuge.

9 Although federal public lands belong to all citizens,
10 this proposed rule caters only to a small minority of trophy
11 hunters, and would allow the State of Alaska to utilize its
12 predator control scheme to suppress vulnerable predator
13 populations, in attempts to artificially boost the number of
14 ungulates available to hunt, despite widespread opposition.

15 Indeed, recent polling data demonstrate that a clear
16 majority of Alaskans across the political spectrum, oppose the
17 practices that would be allowed by the proposed rule. The
18 agency's decision to allow these practices also misunderstands
19 the U.S. Constitution's balance of federal and state power,
20 flies in the face of the Fish and Wildlife Service's mandates
21 for managing the refuge, and is an irresponsible and
22 unsupported decision for the Alaskan economy.

23 Furthermore, the Fish and Wildlife Service must undergo
24 new compatibility determinations for brown bear baiting and
25 trapping without a federal permit, and its environmental

1 assessment is wholly insufficient to meet the agency's
2 statutory duties to consider the environmental impacts of its
3 actions.

4 The Fish and Wildlife Service has consistently maintained
5 for years that the ban on brown bear baiting and the federal
6 trapping permit requirements are absolutely necessary for the
7 proper conservation and management of wildlife on the refuge.
8 The long-held brown bear baiting ban and federal trapping
9 permit requirements also provide important safety benefits.
10 The proposed rule --

11 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

12 **SAMANTHA HAGIO, COMMENTER:** -- is a complete about-face
13 from decades of the agency's sound policy and legal
14 interpretations that cannot simply be overturned without
15 adequate justification.

16 To put it simply, the proposed rule is misguided,
17 disregards science, and runs contrary to the Fish and Wildlife
18 Service's statutory duties. To finalize the proposed rule,
19 would be arbitrary, capricious, and not in accordance with law.
20 It would also be contrary to the will of the people.

21 The Humane Society of the United States and the Humane
22 Society Legislative Fund, therefore, respectfully urge the Fish
23 and Wildlife Service not to finalize this proposed rule. Thank
24 you for your time.

25 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Samantha, for your

1 comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your
2 hand.

3 Okay, our next commenter is number 5, Andy Moderow. Andy
4 has his hand raised. I am going to unmute you. Hello, Andy.

5 **ANDY MODEROW, COMMENTER:** Hello.

6 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Could you please spell out
7 your first and last name for the record?

8 **ANDY MODEROW, COMMENTER:** Yes, my name is Andy, A-n-d-y,
9 Moderow, M-o-d-e-r-o-w, and I'm here representing Alaska
10 Wilderness League.

11 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. Thank you very much.
12 All right, I am going to start your two-minute timer now.

13 **ANDY MODEROW, COMMENTER:** Thank you. I'm testifying
14 today as the state director for Alaska Wilderness League. We
15 have offices in Anchorage and Washington, D.C., and we work to
16 protect Alaska's public lands and waters, including wildlife
17 for today and for generations to come.

18 We'll submit longer comments that outline why,
19 policy-by-policy, the bulk of changes in the envisioned draft
20 EA and proposed rule aren't in the public interest, but, today,
21 I want to focus on two themes you'll be getting from us.

22 The first is when we review these regulations, we don't
23 see the basis for the agency to reverse direction from the
24 thoughtful, balanced approach it took when it finalized its
25 2016 rule, determining that brown bear baiting was

1 inappropriate in the Kenai Refuge, and reaffirming the
2 importance of federal regulations for Kenai Refuge trapping.

3 The 2016 agency action was based on careful consideration
4 of science and public comment, and built on the requirements of
5 the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966,
6 ANILCA, the 2007 Skilak WRA, the refuge CCP, just to name a
7 few. The Administrative Review Act requires the agency to
8 explain any reversal, and the EA fails to provide such an
9 explanation.

10 Courts have looked unfavorably on this administration
11 when they've attempted unexplained reversals in other areas of
12 Alaska, and I urge the agency to take a hard look at the data
13 and laws that are related to this reversal and position,
14 because when you do, you'll find that a reasonable explanation
15 for this switch in position simply doesn't exist.

16 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

17 **ANDY MODEROW, COMMENTER:** The substance of the EA
18 underplays the impacts that could come from removing federal
19 trapping restrictions, and allowing brown bear baiting. The
20 State of Alaska does predator control in many different forms,
21 and often population manipulation is rooted in means, methods,
22 and changes to harvest limits.

23 In Alaska, it's really critical to know all predator
24 manipulation violates ANILCA on federal public lands of this
25 sort, and the agency must look for that and be able to control

1 it before it begins. Thank you for considering my comment.

2 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you very much, Andy,
3 for your comment. I'm going to go ahead and put you back on
4 mute and lower your hand.

5 All right, our next commenter is number 6, Mark Olinger.
6 Mark has his hand raised. I'm going to unmute you. Let's see,
7 you might be double-muted, Mark. See if you can unmute
8 yourself on your end. I'm still trying to get you unmuted,
9 Mark. See if you can unmute yourself on your end. Oh, Mark,
10 hello.

11 **MARK OLINGER, COMMENTER:** Hello. Okay.

12 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Mark --

13 **MARK OLINGER, COMMENTER:** I'm Mark Olinger, M-a-r-k
14 O-l-i-n-g-e-r, and I'm a concerned citizen.

15 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, I will
16 start your two-minute timer now.

17 **MARK OLINGER, COMMENTER:** Thank you for the opportunity
18 to make these remarks today. I am a concerned citizen who
19 cares for the wilderness. I oppose the proposed rule. The
20 proposed rule would allow the unethical practice of allowing
21 hunters to shoot and kill brown bears over piles of bait.

22 There's been a longstanding prohibition of baiting brown
23 bears, because it's in direct conflict with the refuge purpose,
24 which is to conserve wildlife in its natural diversity,
25 including maintaining natural predator/prey relationships.

1 If baiting bears was not bad enough, the proposed rule
2 would allow the following: Opening more of the refuge to
3 trapping with fewer restrictions, which would indiscriminately
4 kill more wildlife; reduce the abundance and diversity of
5 wildlife; and cause untold suffering for animals that die
6 slowly for days in a trap; and more access for snowmobiles,
7 bicycles, and ATVs in nonwilderness portions of the National
8 Wildlife Refuge, which would further stress the brown bear
9 population and other diverse wildlife in it.

10 Instead, the Fish and Wildlife Service needs to protect
11 wildlife by prohibiting bear baiting of any kind, banning
12 trapping altogether, and limiting recreation so as to lessen
13 human impact on the land and its inhabitants.

14 I urge the Fish and Wildlife Service to reject the
15 proposed rule and, instead, administer the Kenai National
16 Wildlife Refuge for the conservation purposes for which it was
17 established. Thank you for your time.

18 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you very much, Mark for
19 your comment. I'm going to lower your hand.

20 All right, our next commenter is number 7, John Morton.
21 John has his hand raised. John, can you hear me?

22 **JOHN MORTON, COMMENTER:** Yeah, hi, Dr. John Morton here.

23 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Hello.

24 **JOHN MORTON, COMMENTER:** J-o-h-n M-o-r-t-o-n.

25 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Perfect. All right, I will

1 start your two-minute now.

2 **JOHN MORTON, COMMENTER:** I've lived here in Soldotna for
3 18 years, 17 of which I was the supervisory biologist at Kenai
4 National Wildlife Refuge. I know what this refuge is about.
5 On any given day in July, for example, refuge staff can be
6 found contacting Russian River anglers, preparing a hiking
7 trail, restoring a public use cabin, herbiciding invasive
8 plants, conducting search and rescue, hosting a summer youth
9 camp, surveying Trumpeter swans, reducing fire fuel loads
10 around communities, grading a road, or assisting with an oil
11 spill.

12 These responsibilities were covered in the 2016 revision
13 of the refuge's comprehensive conservation plan, the outcome of
14 a well-vetted public process that the Department of Interior is
15 trying to undo in its efforts to placate the State of Alaska
16 and Safari Club International.

17 So why is this proposed rule characterized as a means to
18 bring federal and state wildlife management into alignment?
19 This is simply not the case. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife
20 Service and Alaska Department of Fish and Game signed a master
21 memorandum of understanding in 1982. The MOU makes it clear
22 that the Service will manage the fish and wildlife habitat on
23 Service lands, so as to ensure conservation of fish and
24 wildlife populations and habitats and their natural diversity.

25 ADF&G expressly agreed to recognize the Service as the

1 agency with the responsibility to regulate human use on Service
2 lands. More importantly, both agencies agreed to recognize
3 that hunting, trapping, or fishing on Service land is
4 authorized in accordance with applicable state and federal law,
5 unless state regulations are found to be incompatible with
6 refuge goals, objectives or management plans.

7 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

8 **JOHN MORTON, COMMENTER:** The bottom line is the proposed
9 rule hijacks Kenai Refuge's ability to balance the sometimes
10 conflicting mandates under ANILCA, the Wilderness Act, and the
11 Refuge Improvement Act, elevating ADF&G's much narrower
12 priorities of managing game and furbearers for a small number
13 of local users.

14 Why, in the same rule, would we want to allow trapping,
15 where people with dogs will now be allowed to bike. With the
16 exception of the new opportunities for mountain biking in game
17 parks, I am opposed to everything in the proposed Kenai rule.
18 Thank you.

19 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, sir, for your
20 comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your
21 hand.

22 Okay, our next commenter is number 8, Pat Lavin. Pat, I
23 see you have your hand raised. Hello, Pat. Oh, I think you
24 unmuted yourself again. Let me see. There you go. Hi, Pat.

25 **PAT LAVIN, COMMENTER:** Hello.

1 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Hello. Could you please
2 spell out your first and last name for the record?

3 **PAT LAVIN, COMMENTER:** Sure, Pat Lavin, P-a-t L-a-v-i-n.

4 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, I'm going
5 to start your two-minute timer now.

6 **PAT LAVIN, COMMENTER:** Thank you. Pat Lavin, I'm with
7 the Defenders of Wildlife. I'm in Anchorage, Alaska, on the
8 ancestral land of the Dena'ina people. I want to thank you for
9 the opportunity to comment.

10 I also want to complain about the cancellation of
11 tomorrow night's comments, which was full, as I understand it,
12 which is kind of an exclamation point on what's been a poor
13 public process.

14 As others have said, there's no good explanation for the
15 reversal of longstanding refuge policies, especially with
16 regard to brown bear baiting and trapping, and these changes
17 are inconsistent with the mission of the Kenai Refuge.

18 While we've submitted detailed comments on all that, and
19 since I cannot compete with Samantha when it comes to speed
20 reading, what I want to do instead is share with you a poem on
21 this topic. It's brand new, and I call it, Actually, what you
22 need to know about this wasn't mentioned in kindergarten. It
23 goes like this:

24 What was it got us into this mess? Well, it was power
25 and money, I guess. There's money in hunting those trophy

1 bears and power in who gets to say who goes where, so
2 resentment there, too. Based on myth, also known as a lie that
3 says it's our state's right to decide. Our congress people,
4 governor claim that it's true. These wildlife decisions have
5 nothing to do with the reasons the federal lands were created.

6 That's not just outdated; it's wrong. To all Americans,
7 the refuge belongs, and the vision there is to let wildlife
8 thrive in its natural state to emphatically --

9 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

10 **PAT LAVIN, COMMENTER:** -- not be just one more place
11 where bears are scarce and there's no trace of our lost
12 paradise. That was the end.

13 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Pat, for your
14 comment. I'm going to lower your hand.

15 Okay, our next commenter is number 9, Fran Mauer. Fran,
16 if you are with us tonight and would like to make a comment --
17 you might be a phone caller. I'm going to ask to unmute. And
18 you will hit star-6 -- oh, there you are.

19 **FRAN MAUER, COMMENTER:** Can you hear me?

20 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Hello. I can.

21 **FRAN MAUER, COMMENTER:** This is Fran.

22 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Hi, Fran. Can you please
23 spell your first and last name for the record?

24 **FRAN MAUER, COMMENTER:** My first name is Fran, F-r-a-n;
25 last name Mauer, M-a-u-e-r.

1 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great, thank you very much,
2 sir. Okay, I'm going to start your two-minute timer now.

3 **FRAN MAUER, COMMENTER:** Yes, I represent the Alaska
4 Chapter of Wilderness Watch. But prior to passage of the
5 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, I worked for
6 the Fish and Wildlife Service in a planning assignment
7 regarding the proposed ANILCA. I remain familiar with the
8 intentions of the proposed -- or the purposes of -- for
9 establishing refuges in Alaska.

10 Having reviewed Secretary Zinke's orders 3347 and 3356,
11 upon which these regulations are based, I'm struck by the
12 existence of a gaping discrepancy between these orders and the
13 draft regulations.

14 The secretary's orders call for, and I quote, increased
15 outdoor recreation, improved management of game, including
16 opportunities to hunt, unquote.

17 These directives were predicated in the secretary's order
18 by the statement, except as otherwise required by federal law.
19 This is where the great discrepancy lies. The proposed
20 regulations would replace existing regulations that prohibit
21 the baiting of brown bears, and replace existing trapping
22 requirements. They also expand access in this heavily-used
23 refuge and would impact the wilderness character of the refuge.

24 The new regulations could violate a fundamental refuge
25 purpose spelled out in ANILCA, to conserve fish and wildlife

1 populations and habitats in their natural diversity. They also
2 violate the secretary's orders themselves, except as otherwise
3 required by federal law. Because such changes are at odds with
4 the Alaska -- the National Wildlife Refuge Administration Act
5 and its compatibility requirements --

6 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

7 **FRAN MAUER, COMMENTER:** -- the Refuge Improvement Act,
8 the Wilderness Act, and ANILCA, I recommend that this entire
9 process be abandoned immediately, because, if implemented, it
10 would seriously harm the ecological integrity of the Kenai
11 National Refuge, which the Fish and Wildlife Service has the
12 responsibility to protect. Also, there's strong public support
13 for the current protective rules, and equally strong opposition
14 to these proposed rules. Thank you.

15 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Fran. I
16 appreciate your comment. I'll put you back on mute.

17 Our next commenter is number 10, Simone St. Clare. And I
18 think this will be you, a phone caller. And to unmute
19 yourself, you press star-6 on your telephone keypad. Simone,
20 if that is your with your hand raised, please hit star-6 on
21 your telephone keypad to unmute yourself. I'll try one more
22 time. Let's see, Simone, if that is you with your hand raised,
23 please hit star-6 on your telephone keypad. Okay, we can't
24 seem to get you unmuted, if that is you, Simone. We'll try to
25 come back to you.

1 So we're going to move on to our next commenter,
2 number 11, Annapoorne Colangelo. Apologies if I butchered your
3 name. Annapoorne, if you are with us tonight and would like to
4 make a comment, please raise your hand and let us know that you
5 are available and ready to comment. You can access that
6 feature at the bottom of your participant screen or by hitting
7 star-9 on your telephone keypad. Annapoorne Colangelo.

8 Okay, we're going to move to our next commenter,
9 number 12, Barbara Trypaluk. Barbara, if you are with us
10 tonight -- all right, here's a phone caller I'm going to try to
11 get unmuted. Please hit star-6. Hello.

12 **BARBARA TRYPALUK, COMMENTER:** Hello.

13 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Hi.

14 **BARBARA TRYPALUK, COMMENTER:** Hello, everyone.

15 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Hi. Please spell your first
16 and last name for the record, if you could?

17 **BARBARA TRYPALUK, COMMENTER:** My name is Barbara,
18 B-a-r-b-a-r-a, Trypaluk, T-r-y-p-a-l-u-k.

19 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great.

20 **BARBARA TRYPALUK, COMMENTER:** And I'm calling from New
21 York State --

22 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Oh, okay.

23 **BARBARA TRYPALUK, COMMENTER:** -- near the Adirondacks.

24 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thanks, Barbara. All right,
25 I will start your two-minute timer now.

1 **BARBARA TRYPALUK, COMMENTER:** I am calling because I'm
2 very opposed to the new rules. By allowing bear baiting, the
3 FWS would be turning a wildlife habitat into a bear game farm.
4 The FWS already allows hunting on the Kenai Peninsula,
5 something that I never knew was supposed to happen in a
6 wildlife refuge.

7 And, you know, there are plenty of hunters already, fly
8 fishermen, people coming to see the bears at Brooks Falls. We
9 need to really preserve this paradise. This place is not a
10 place only for recreation either. It's a place to contemplate
11 nature and to be close to nature.

12 I believe Henry David Thoreau said: In wildness is the
13 preservation of man. This is something we have to keep in
14 mind, especially now when we're dealing with climate change,
15 and all of the wildlife is -- these are just uncertain times.

16 For the fish, I heard that salmon in Southcentral Alaska
17 last summer were jumping out of the waters. They could not --
18 they were dying --

19 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

20 **BARBARA TRYPALUK, COMMENTER:** -- by the thousands because
21 of the high temperature. We have to preserve what is left.

22 And I'm also against allowing ATVs and expanding -- you
23 know, allowing more snowmobiles and bicycles. Bicycles, that's
24 a slippery slope that could lead to more -- to e-bikes. This
25 is something that is happening in our backyard here in the

1 wilderness. So I appreciate your letting me speak and I
2 certainly hope these rules are tossed out. Goodnight.

3 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Barbara, for your
4 comment. I appreciate it.

5 All right, I'm going to move to the next commenter,
6 number 13, Kelly Shuppe or Shupp (ph). Kelly, if you are out
7 there with us tonight and would like to comment, please raise
8 your hand by using the raise-hand feature at the bottom of your
9 participant screen or by hitting star-9 on your telephone
10 keypad. Kelly Shupp (ph) or Kelly Shuppe.

11 Okay, I'm going to move to the next commenter, number 14,
12 Alexa Ross. Alexa, if you are with us tonight and would like
13 to provide a comment, please let us know by raising your hand.
14 You can do that by accessing the feature at the bottom of the
15 participant list or by hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad.
16 Alexa Ross.

17 Okay, I'm going to move to the next commenter, number 15,
18 Jeremy Trimm. Jeremy, if you are with us tonight and would
19 like to provide a comment, please raise your hand by using the
20 feature at the bottom of the participant list or by hitting
21 star-9 on your telephone keypad. Jeremy Trimm.

22 Okay, our next commenter is number 16, Louis Botel.
23 Louis, if you are with us tonight and would like to provide a
24 comment, please raise your hand and let us know by using the
25 feature at the bottom of the participant list, which is at the

1 bottom of your Zoom screen or by hitting star-9 on your
2 telephone keypad. Louis Botel.

3 Okay, I'm going to move to our next commenter, number 17,
4 Melissa VerDuin. Melissa, if you're with us and would like to
5 provide a comment, please raise your hand and let us know by
6 using that raise-hand feature at the bottom of your Zoom
7 participant list or by hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad.
8 Melissa VerDuin.

9 Okay, I'm going to move to our next commenter, number 18,
10 Kevin Petty. Kevin, if you are with us tonight and would like
11 to make a comment, please raise your hand by using that feature
12 at the bottom of the Zoom participant list or by hitting star-9
13 on your telephone keypad. Kevin Petty.

14 Okay, I'm going to move to our next commenter, number 19,
15 Mattie Goodwin. Mattie, if you would like to provide a comment
16 tonight, please raise your hand and let us know by using that
17 feature at the bottom of your participant list or by hitting
18 star-9 on your telephone keypad. Mattie Goodwin.

19 Okay, our next commenter is number 20, Judith Embry.
20 Judith, if you are out there and would like to provide a
21 comment tonight, please raise your hand by using the feature at
22 the bottom of your participant list or by hitting star-9 on
23 your telephone keypad. Judith Embry.

24 Okay, our next commenter is number 21, Robert Bahmann.
25 Robert, if you are out there and would like to provide a

1 comment, please raise your hand by using the raise-hand feature
2 in your participant list or by hitting star-9 on your telephone
3 keypad. Robert Bahmann.

4 Okay, our next commenter is number 22, Ross Hirschman.
5 Ross, if you are with us tonight and would like to provide a
6 comment, please let us know and raise your hand by using the
7 feature at the bottom of your Zoom participant list or by
8 hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad. Ross Hirschman.

9 Okay, our next commenter is number 23, Arturo Beyeler.
10 Arturo, if you are with us tonight and would like to make a
11 comment, please raise your hand using the feature at the bottom
12 of your participant list or by hitting star-9 on your telephone
13 keypad. Arturo Beyeler.

14 Okay, our next commenter is number 24, Peter Wood.
15 Peter, if you are with us tonight and would like to provide a
16 comment, please raise your hand and let us know by using the
17 raise-hand feature at the bottom of your participant list or by
18 hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad. Peter Wood.

19 Okay, our next commenter is number 25, Caveman
20 Consulting. If you are out there and would like to provide a
21 comment tonight, please raise your hand and let us know by
22 using the feature at the bottom of your participant list or by
23 hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad.

24 Okay, I'm going to move to our next commenter, number 26,
25 Adrienne Naumann. I see, Adrienne, you have your hand raised.

1 I'm going to unmute you. Hi, Adrienne.

2 **ADRIENNE NAUMANN, COMMENTER:** Hi, can you hear me?

3 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** I can. Can you please spell
4 out your first and last name for the record?

5 **ADRIENNE NAUMANN, COMMENTER:** Sure. Adrienne Naumann,
6 A-d-r-i-e-n-n-e, Naumann, N-a-u-m-a-n-n.

7 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, I will
8 start your two-minute timer now.

9 **ADRIENNE NAUMANN, COMMENTER:** Good evening, ladies and
10 gentlemen. I vehemently oppose these proposed regulations for
11 all the reasons people have already mentioned and some -- a big
12 one of my own.

13 As a preliminary matter, with respect to the wildlife, my
14 understanding from the Alaska commissioner at this hearing,
15 that these rules are based on scientific studies, which is the
16 first time we've heard this in the series of hearings yesterday
17 and today.

18 However, I'm an attorney. I also have two biology
19 degrees. I've also done research on studies for reasons why --
20 scientific reasons why these rules should be just scrapped
21 totally. I challenge the commissioner; I respectfully
22 challenge him, if he's still on this call, and if he's not on
23 this call, in any event, to submit to the public, the studies
24 by universities or other not-for-profit agencies that
25 substantiate and support these terrible, terrible rule changes

1 that would, quite honestly -- and I mean this in all
2 seriousness -- would turn this wildlife refuge into a
3 concentration camp for animals and wildlife.

4 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

5 **ADRIENNE NAUMANN, COMMENTER:** The result being a
6 holocaust of the brown bears, the wild flowers, and the other
7 animals. As my parting statement, there's also a concern for
8 the million visitors each year. These motorized vehicles go at
9 30 to 40 miles an hour. I don't want to be there when they
10 start running into people and their children on the trails.
11 Thank you very much.

12 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Adrienne. I'm
13 going to lower your hand.

14 All right, our next commenter is number 27, Harry Mozen.
15 Harry, if you are with us tonight, please raise your hand by
16 using the feature at the bottom of your participant list. You
17 can access the participant list by hovering your cursor over
18 the bottom of your screen or by hitting star-9 on your
19 telephone keypad. Harry Mozen.

20 Okay, I'm going to move to our next commenter, number 28,
21 Holly Koppenhaver. Holly, if you are with us tonight and would
22 like to provide a comment, please raise your hand by using the
23 feature at the bottom of your participant list, which you can
24 find if you hover your cursor over the bottom of your Zoom
25 screen, or by hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad. Holly

1 Koppenhaver.

2 Okay, I'm going to move to our next commenter, number 29,
3 Robert Stayton. Robert, if you are with us tonight and would
4 like to provide a comment, please raise your hand by using the
5 raise-hand feature at the bottom of your Zoom participant list
6 or by hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad. Robert Stayton.

7 Okay, our next commenter is number 30, Gail Flanders.
8 Gail, if you are with us tonight and would like to provide a
9 comment, please let us know by raising your hand, which you can
10 access at the bottom of your participant list in Zoom or by
11 hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad. Gail Flanders.

12 Okay, our next commenter is number 31, Annie Madden.
13 Annie, if you are with us tonight and would like to provide a
14 comment, please raise your hand by using the feature at the
15 bottom of your Zoom participant list or by hitting star-9 on
16 your telephone keypad. Annie Madden.

17 Okay, our next commenter is number 32, Diane Harris.
18 Diane, if you are with us tonight and would like to provide a
19 comment, please let us know by raising your hand. You can find
20 that feature at the bottom of your participant list or by
21 hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad. Diane Harris.

22 Okay, our next commenter is number 33, Leslie Smith.
23 Leslie, if you are out there and would like to provide a
24 comment, please raise your hand through the Zoom feature at the
25 bottom of your participant list or by hitting star-9 on your

1 telephone keypad. Leslie Smith.

2 Okay, our next commenter is 34, Barbara Becker. Barbara,
3 if you are with us tonight and would like to provide a comment,
4 please let us know by raising your hand, using the raise-hand
5 feature at the bottom of your participant list or by hitting
6 star-9 on the telephone keypad. Barbara Becker.

7 Okay, our next commenter is number 35, Cameron Tempest.
8 Cameron, if you are out there and would like to provide a
9 comment tonight, please raise your hand by accessing the
10 raise-hand feature in your participant list or by hitting
11 star-9 on your telephone keypad. Cameron Tempest.

12 Okay, our next commenter is number 36, Sandra Holloway.
13 Sandra, if you are with us tonight and would like to provide a
14 comment, please let us know by raising your hand by using the
15 feature at the bottom of your participant list or by hitting
16 star-9 on your telephone keypad. Sandra Holloway.

17 Okay, our next commenter is number 37, Andrew Josephson.
18 I see Andrew has his hand raised. Hello, Andrew.

19 **ANDREW JOSEPHSON, COMMENTER:** Hello.

20 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Could you please spell your
21 first and last name for the record?

22 **ANDREW JOSEPHSON, COMMENTER:** Sure. Andrew, A-n-d-r-e-w;
23 last name Josephson, J-o-s-e-p-h-s-o-n.

24 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you very much. Okay, I
25 am going to start your two-minute timer now.

1 **ANDREW JOSEPHSON, COMMENTER:** Good evening. My name is
2 Andy Josephson. I'm a 56-year resident of Alaska and a former
3 resident of the Kenai Peninsula. I'm an avid trail user,
4 fisherman, and kayaker in the Kenai. I've horseback ridden
5 trail -- ski trails and backpacked trails throughout the Kenai.

6 Fish and Wildlife has invited testimony specifically
7 relating to the impacts the proposed liberalized hunting, and
8 especially trapping practices, on the non-consumptive economy
9 in the Kenai.

10 In March 30th, 2019, a Peninsula Clarion article noted
11 that visitors spent \$187 million touring the Kenai in one
12 season. The visitor count was over 560,000. 2,500 people work
13 directly in tourism on the Kenai, and there are an additional
14 600 indirect jobs, and 95 million in wages that
15 (indiscernible).

16 Mr. Dennis Meadows of the Kenai Peninsula Tours and
17 Marketing Council, said, quote, the three big draws to the
18 Kenai Peninsula have consistently been to see glaciers,
19 wildlife, and to go fishing. Fish and Wildlife can have real
20 confidence that the vast majority of these visitors would not
21 support these regulatory changes. They would not want to hear
22 about (indiscernible) and would not support the ease with which
23 trapping will be allowed under this reg's passage.

24 They would find it abhorrent that trappers could trap
25 within one mile of trailheads, highways, and campgrounds, and

1 you can believe with great confidence that if visitors and
2 Alaskans knew about these practices, they would have greater
3 concerns with their own and their families' physical safety.

4 They would find it abhorrent also that trappers would not
5 need to inspect their traps in (indiscernible).

6 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

7 **ANDREW JOSEPHSON, COMMENTER:** They would find it
8 abhorrent that the Kenai's unique and accessible population of
9 brown bears could be shot over a bait station. And they would
10 find loathsome the idea that the very agency that is having
11 this public hearing recently invested in safe means of wildlife
12 travel across the Sterling Highway using venting and culverts,
13 only to now allow trapping right along those same pathways,
14 (indiscernible) enhanced trapping zones.

15 And, finally, I find the proposed regs violate your own
16 agency's official objectives and mission statements, as they
17 are not legally (indiscernible). They violate federal law and
18 their own agency's (indiscernible). Thank you.

19 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you for your comment.
20 I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your hand.

21 Okay, our next commenter is number 38, Sarah Stokey.
22 Sarah, I see you have your hand raised. You might be -- there
23 you go. Hi, Sarah.

24 **SARAH STOKEY, COMMENTER:** Hi. Thank you. Can you hear
25 me now?

1 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Absolutely. Please spell
2 your first and last name for the record.

3 **SARAH STOKEY, COMMENTER:** S-a-r-a-h S-t-o-k-e-y.

4 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, I am going
5 to start your two-minute timer now.

6 **SARAH STOKEY, COMMENTER:** Okay, good evening. My name is
7 Sarah Stokey. I am a Kenai Peninsula resident. I recreate in
8 the Kenai Wildlife Refuge routinely, both kayaking, hunting --
9 or hiking and as well as packrafting. I am the owner of two
10 tourism-based businesses.

11 I've been adversely impacted in my own life by changes to
12 trapping regulations near trailheads. Several years ago, I had
13 a dog get lost, took off from the leash, get caught in a trap
14 and killed. This is an issue that, to me, is both personal and
15 important. And I strongly, strongly, strongly believe that
16 eliminating the hunting reg -- or hunting and trapping
17 regulations in place right now is to the detriment of many
18 users who currently recreate there, to create a small gain for
19 a small group of people.

20 I truly think doing so is going to escalate conflict,
21 hurt pets, and cause needless suffering in many, many beautiful
22 wild animals. I truly think that these changes are for the
23 worst. Thank you.

24 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Sarah. I'll put
25 you back on mute and lower your hand.

1 Okay, our next commenter is number 39, Teresa Becher.
2 Teresa has got her hand raised. I'm going to unmute you. Hi,
3 Teresa.

4 **TERESA BECHER, COMMENTER:** Hi, can you hear me?

5 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Yes, I can. Can you please
6 spell your first and last name for the record?

7 **TERESA BECHER, COMMENTER:** Teresa, T-e-r-e-s-a, Becher,
8 B-e-c-h-e-r.

9 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great, thank you. All right,
10 I'm going to start your two-minute timer now.

11 **TERESA BECHER, COMMENTER:** Hi, my name is Teresa Becher.
12 I'm retired and I live in Soldotna, Alaska. I strongly oppose
13 these rules. My interest in these rules are two-fold. One, I
14 regularly hike, camp, recreate, and practice photography in the
15 Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, all with my many dogs in tow.

16 Second, is that I love this refuge, because its real
17 purpose is to protect wildlife for its own sake and in its
18 natural abundance, rather than for the benefit of human
19 consumption or things like trophy hunting, which I find
20 abhorrent. The Kenai rule will be a first step in overturning
21 the status of this refuge as a preserved wildlife habitat.

22 With regard to trapping, this rule will eliminate common
23 sense regulations, like mandatory trapping training,
24 requirements to mark or even check traps, and it reduces safety
25 buffers that are there to protect humans and their pets from

1 being caught in traps. These buffers also protect wildlife
2 trying to move across and around the roadways. This rule will
3 eliminate any trapping accountability whatsoever on the refuge,
4 and allow inhumane trapping techniques.

5 With regard to brown bears, this rule will allow hunting
6 by baiting with natural and human foods. Nobody but trophy
7 hunters should be excited about this. Baiting for brown bears
8 will increase the number of brown bears killed every year.
9 I've not seen any indication that there are increased brown
10 bear numbers on the Kenai Peninsula that would warrant
11 liberalizing any of these hunting rules.

12 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

13 **TERESA BECHER, COMMENTER:** In addition, setting out bait
14 for brown bears will only habituate them to human food.
15 It'll also create more conflicts between bears and humans, and
16 teach bears to congregate in areas where baiting has occurred.

17 You've probably heard a lot about what Alaskans want
18 these days. Well, real Alaskans don't want to liberalize
19 hunting and trapping restrictions to benefit only a few,
20 especially where it will clearly harm the animal population.
21 Real Alaskans are stewards -- or stewards, excuse me, of the
22 wildlife population, both for its own sake and for basic
23 subsistence. I do not support these rule changes for the Kenai
24 National Wildlife Refuge. Thank you.

25 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Teresa. I'm going

1 to put you back on mute and lower your hand.

2 Okay, our next commenter is number 40, Alana Liechty.
3 Alana or Alana, if you are with us tonight and would like to
4 provide a comment, please raise your hand by accessing the
5 raise-hand feature at the bottom of your participant list, and
6 you can find that participant list at the bottom of your Zoom
7 screen, if you hover your cursor over the bottom. Or if you're
8 calling in using the phone, please hit star-9 on your telephone
9 keypad. Alana Liechty.

10 Okay, our next commenter is number 41, Nancy Lowell.
11 Nancy, if you are with us tonight and would like to provide a
12 comment, please let us know and raise your hand. You can raise
13 your hand by using the feature at the bottom of your
14 participant list or by hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad
15 if you are calling in using the phone. Nancy Lowell.

16 Okay, I'm going to move to our next commenter, number 42,
17 Pamela Gross. I see Pamela has her hand raised. Hello,
18 Pamela.

19 **PAMELA GROSS, COMMENTER:** Hi, Amy. Can you hear me?

20 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** I can. Can you please spell
21 your first and last name for the record?

22 **PAMELA GROSS, COMMENTER:** Sure, P-a-m-e-l-a G-r-o-s-s.

23 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, I'm going
24 to start your two-minute timer now.

25 **PAMELA GROSS, COMMENTER:** Hi. I am a resident of

1 Washington State. I have also lived and traveled throughout
2 Alaska. I'm a hiker, a sailor, and an outdoor enthusiast. We
3 have pilots, skiers, rock climbers, mountain climbers, writers,
4 and community leaders in our family. I speak on behalf of them
5 all. I also serve on the board of my local community
6 foundation.

7 The proposed rule changes will completely alter the Kenai
8 Refuge in a detrimental manner, and stand in stark contrast
9 with the purpose for which the refuge was created. As
10 presented, they should be rejected.

11 On the topic of bear baiting, I remind us that when the
12 Alaska Board of Game proposed allowing the baiting of brown
13 bears in the Kenai Refuge, Fish and Wildlife implemented
14 regulations that prohibited this activity, and acknowledged the
15 risk to human safety. There is no justification or scientific
16 analysis for this proposed rule change.

17 Fish and Wildlife, you have the support of the vast
18 majority of the public to end the practice of baiting for
19 killing for good.

20 On trapping, the vast majority of Americans no longer
21 support trapping animals. Allowing this cruel treatment of
22 wildlife has no place in national wildlife refuge. Rather than
23 weakening trapping regulations, trapping should be altogether
24 banned in the refuge.

25 On expanded use and access, we do not support provisions

1 to expand access within the refuge, because increased access
2 will create far more disturbance and far less security for
3 wildlife.

4 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

5 **PAMELA GROSS, COMMENTER:** The Kenai National Wildlife
6 Refuge was established as a refuge, not a recreation area.
7 Please, uphold the purpose for which this refuge was
8 established and is beloved by rejecting the current proposed
9 regulation changes developed on behalf of a small group of
10 special interests. What is the purpose of a wildlife refuge,
11 if wildlife finds no refuge there? Thank you

12 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Pamela. I'm going
13 to put you back on mute and lower your hand.

14 Okay, our next commenter is number 43, Shirley McCarthy,
15 and I see Shirley has her hand raised. I'm going to unmute
16 her. Hi, Shirley.

17 **SHIRLEY MCCARTHY, COMMENTER:** Hi. Shirley McCarthy,
18 Dr. Shirley McCarthy, spelled S-h-i-r-l-e-y M-c-C-a-r-t-h-y.

19 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you.

20 **SHIRLEY MCCARTHY, COMMENTER:** You bet.

21 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** I will start your two-minute
22 timer now.

23 **SHIRLEY MCCARTHY, COMMENTER:** Okay. As a physician and
24 mammalian physiologist, I am adamantly opposed to trapping and
25 bear baiting, because they are inhumane and unethical. The

1 World Wildlife Fund just reported a 70 percent decrease in the
2 (indiscernible) wildlife since 1970, all human caused.

3 Use of terms by an earlier commentator, such as sustained
4 yield, harvest brown bears like they are bales of hay serves to
5 distance us from the fact that these animals are intelligent,
6 feeling, living things. They should not die or suffer simply
7 because there are a few humans who get pleasure out of their
8 killing or suffering.

9 Wildlife refuges are for preserving wildlife, not for the
10 sense of point-blank killing or torturing in a trap for fun or
11 entertainment. Thank you.

12 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Shirley. I'm
13 going to put you back on mute and lower your hand.

14 Okay, our next commenter is number 44, Peter Bahls.
15 Peter, if you are with us tonight and would like to provide a
16 comment, please raise your hand and let us know. You can
17 access the raise-hand feature at the bottom of your Zoom
18 participant list or by hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad.
19 Peter Bahls.

20 Okay, I'm going to move to our next commenter, number 45,
21 Bill Watkins. Hi, Bill. I see you've got your hand raised.
22 I'm going to unmute you. Hi, Bill.

23 **BILL WATKINS, COMMENTER:** Hi, how are you?

24 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** I'm doing well, thank you.
25 Could you please spell out your first and last name?

1 **BILL WATKINS, COMMENTER:** Sure, B-i-l-l W-a-t-k-i-n-s.

2 And I guess I represent Denali Wolves, which is an advocacy
3 educational group site on Facebook.

4 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, I am going
5 to start your two-minute timer now.

6 **BILL WATKINS, COMMENTER:** In 1994, I went on a trip to
7 Haines with a friend to photograph bald eagles at the Chilkat
8 Bald Eagle Preserve. That evening, as we were driving along
9 the dirt road that paralleled Herman Creek, we noticed that
10 spawned out salmon had been thrown up from the creek onto the
11 bank. As we continued driving up the road, in the glare of the
12 headlights, we came across two bear hunters who were in the
13 process of butchering a grizzly bear that had been killed over
14 the baited salmon.

15 The following morning, we retraced our steps and came
16 across a now dumped headless, pawless, and skinned-out bear
17 carcass lying in Herman Creek. My feelings were raging by this
18 time. Not only was this a blatant act of disrespect for the
19 bear, but I also felt it was a clear act of wanton waste, which
20 is supposed to be illegal.

21 We drove back into Haines to report what we saw to the
22 Alaska State Troopers, and much to our incredible
23 disappointment, the troopers that said that this was not wanton
24 waste, was not illegal, and they had no interest in it. This
25 entire episode destroyed my trip for myself, and we ended up

1 driving back to Denali afterwards.

2 As a wilderness tour guide in Denali National Park, as
3 well as previously photographing nature and wildlife on a
4 part-time professional basis for 18 years, I believe it is our
5 responsibility to educate and create understanding towards
6 nature and wildlife and see to their conservation and
7 protection.

8 Bear baiting fundamentally treats bears with zero respect
9 for themselves, what they contribute to the ecosystem, and does
10 not require a learning or understanding of the intricacies of
11 bear behavior. It uses fundamental behavior, the eternal
12 search for food, against them in the most unskillful,
13 unethical, least sportsmanlike manner, and it potentially
14 trains bears that are not killed to associate food -- human
15 foods to people -- or trains bears that are not killed to
16 associate human foods to people, thereby endangering anyone who
17 encounters that bear in the future. This is especially
18 important in regards to the safety of nearby communities,
19 residents, and recreational users.

20 Lastly, when I see proposals which would allow bear
21 baiting within a national wildlife refuge or anywhere, I once
22 again picture that skinned-out, headless, and pawless bear
23 carcass that was dumped into Herman Creek, and feel those old
24 feelings begin to churn. Bear baiting has no place in the
25 Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, and, in fact, Alaska is the

1 only one of nine states that allow it. We shouldn't be
2 expanding it. We should be banning bear baiting statewide.

3 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Bill, for your
4 comment.

5 **BILL WATKINS, COMMENTER:** Thank you.

6 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** I'm going to put you back on
7 mute and lower your hand.

8 All right, our next commenter is number 46, Paula
9 Shafransky. I see you've got your hand raised, Paula. I'm
10 going to unmute you. Hi, Paula.

11 **PAULA SHAFRANSKY, COMMENTER:** Hi. Thank you for allowing
12 me to comment.

13 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Of course. Could you please
14 spell your first and last name for the record?

15 **PAULA SHAFRANSKY, COMMENTER:** P-a-u-l-a
16 S-h-a-f-r-a-n-s-k-y.

17 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, I'm going
18 to start your two-minute timer now.

19 **PAULA SHAFRANSKY, COMMENTER:** I completely agree with all
20 the previous comments against these proposed changes in
21 regulations by the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. I
22 especially think that Pamela Gross, Teresa Becher, Andrew
23 Josephson, Sarah Stokey, and Adrienne Naumann spoke eloquently,
24 especially about the need for scientific research as the reason
25 for why these rules and regulations are being changed.

1 I think that these rules and regs seem to be being
2 changed for the benefit of trophy hunters. I'm not sure. I
3 think that Alaska residents are smart. They want to preserve
4 what's important to them, what's pristine, what brings people
5 in to visit their country.

6 I also think that bear baiting of any kind should be
7 prohibited. I think banning [sic] should be banned -- trapping
8 should be banned altogether, and a limit of recreation use to
9 limit and lessen human impact would be beneficial.

10 I've been an avid hiker in the wilderness areas all over
11 the west, including Alaska, for the last 50 years. We need to
12 preserve these special areas. We can't impinge on them and
13 take away the wildlife that lives there just for our benefit.
14 It is unconscionable.

15 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

16 **PAULA SHAFRANSKY, COMMENTER:** We need to (indiscernible -
17 simultaneous speech) places and save them for future
18 generations. If not, we are all far less able to have a great
19 life. I appreciate you hearing these comments, and please,
20 please don't roll back these regs.

21 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Paula, for your
22 comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your
23 hand.

24 Okay, our next commenter is Sarah Stewart. Sarah has her
25 hand raised. I'm going to unmute you. Hi, Sarah.

1 **SARAH STEWART, COMMENTER:** Hi, Amy.

2 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Hi.

3 **SARAH STEWART, COMMENTER:** Thanks for allowing me to
4 speak.

5 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Sure. Could you please spell
6 your first and last name for the record?

7 **SARAH STEWART, COMMENTER:** Sure. My name is Sarah,
8 S-a-r-a-h, Stewart, S-t-e-w-a-r-t.

9 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Wonderful. All right, I'm
10 going to start your two-minute timer now.

11 **SARAH STEWART, COMMENTER:** Thank you. I really
12 appreciate and agree with all of the last few speakers that
13 I've heard over the last half hour. I'm actually from
14 Gardiner, Montana, and my living depends on wildlife and the
15 care of wildlife. And my family and I love Alaska, and we love
16 the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge.

17 And we believe a wildlife refuge is, as others have said,
18 a refuge for wildlife. And trying to make use of wildlife's
19 instincts and sense of safety in a wildlife refuge by changing
20 the laws -- and the -- all -- every single one of these
21 proposed rules is -- it's -- it seems almost like against
22 humanity to us. It's not sportsmanlike, it's not -- it's just
23 not right to treat animals this way.

24 And it turns the idea of a wildlife refuge into the
25 opposite of what it was set up to be, and what the U.S. Fish

1 and Wildlife is supposed to be protecting. It's in the U.S.
2 Fish and Wildlife's job description to be caring and protecting
3 wildlife, and not caring for the interests of a few hunters and
4 trappers.

5 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

6 **SARAH STEWART, COMMENTER:** And I've really appreciated
7 hearing from Alaskans about how much they value wildlife as we
8 do in Montana. And I hope that all of these proposed rules
9 will be rejected. Thank you.

10 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Sarah, for your
11 comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your
12 hand.

13 Okay, our next commenter is number 48, Sam Zappala. Sam,
14 if you are out there and would like to provide a comment,
15 please raise your hand and let us know by using that raise-hand
16 feature at the bottom of your participant screen or by hitting
17 star-9 on your telephone keypad. Sam Zappala or Zappala.

18 Okay, I think that we are now going to move into a
19 five-minute break, if that is correct, Amanda?

20 **AMANDA BIEDERMANN, FACILITATOR:** Yes, thank you, Amy. As
21 you can see from the screen, we're going to take a quick
22 five-minute break. I'm going to go back to this slide and
23 leave it up for the duration of the break to give everyone an
24 idea of where we're at in the commenter list.

25 As you can see, we're roughly halfway through. Again, I

1 would just like to stress to everyone that, once we have
2 reached the end of this list, we're going to go back through
3 this list one more time just in case anybody that we called on
4 earlier joined a little bit late. We'll let them have their
5 opportunity to comment.

6 After that, we will then open up the meeting to anybody
7 who would like to offer a comment. I have gotten messages from
8 a few people, and I would just like to reiterate that we will
9 open up the comment period, and then we will go in the order
10 that we see hands raised.

11 And so, right now, I'm -- we're not going to go in the
12 order that anybody messaged me tonight. We're going to go in
13 the order that we see a hand raised and, hopefully, we'll get
14 everyone's comments before 9:00 o'clock p.m. Alaska time. So
15 thank you, everyone, for being understanding of that process.

16 So it's about 5:32 p.m. Alaska time, and so we're going
17 to come back at 5:37 p.m. Alaska time. Thank you, everyone.

18 (Off record)

19 (On record)

20 **AMANDA BIEDERMANN, FACILITATOR:** Hello, everyone. We're
21 going to continue on with our public comment portion of the
22 meeting. It's about 5:37 p.m. Alaska time.

23 And I do apologize if my instructions were confusing
24 before the break. I just want to clarify, again, once we move
25 through the registered participants' list, we will then open up

1 the meeting to others who would like to comment.

2 So, at this time, again, as we've been doing throughout
3 the meeting, we will alert you to raise your hand if you would
4 like to offer a comment, and we will let you know once we open
5 it up to everyone on the meeting so that they can raise their
6 hand.

7 But, again, at this time, we are just asking that the
8 current commenter and possibly the next commenter in line use
9 that raise-hand feature so that they can offer their comments.

10 Thank you, everyone, and, at this time, I'm going to go
11 ahead and turn it back over to Amy Lewis.

12 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Okay, let's switch over to
13 our participant screen and the timer. Great. So it looks like
14 our next commenter is Robert Binnie. Robert has his hand
15 raised. I'm going to unmute you. You might also be muted on
16 your end, Robert.

17 **ROBERT BINNIE, COMMENTER:** Hello.

18 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Could you please --

19 **ROBERT BINNIE, COMMENTER:** Sorry about that.

20 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** No worries. Could you please
21 spell out your first and last name for us?

22 **ROBERT BINNIE, COMMENTER:** Sure, thanks for the
23 opportunity. Robert Binnie, R-o-b-e-r-t, Binnie, B-i-n-n-i-e.

24 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Excellent. Thank you for
25 joining us. All right, I'm going to start your two-minute

1 timer now.

2 **ROBERT BINNIE, COMMENTER:** I am a hunter who lives in
3 Arizona. I just finished processing this year's elk. And I'm
4 also a regular visitor to Alaska. I come to the refuge to
5 experience places where nature is lightly touched by the hand
6 of man.

7 I'm opposed to the proposed regulatory changes, not only
8 because they would degrade the natural character of the Kenai
9 and reduce its value to wildlife, but also because they would
10 deprive me of treasured recreational and spiritual
11 opportunities. These losses would constitute a taking.

12 The refuge is a rare and precious resource. It's part of
13 our national endowment. It belongs to each and every American,
14 no more or less to those of us fortunate enough to live in
15 Alaska. Our national wildlife refuges, especially those with
16 large federal wilderness components, exist for the benefit of
17 wildlife, not recreation, and they should be managed
18 accordingly.

19 I believe that intact, undisturbed natural ecosystem
20 should be the primary management goal, and recreation should
21 only be accommodated if and when impacts on wildlife are
22 insignificant.

23 Focusing on recreation, these changes would reduce
24 opportunities for people like me who value quiet and solitude
25 above all else. These days, more people than ever are

1 participating in outdoor sports, making it very difficult to
2 find areas to be truly alone in nature.

3 The Kenai is one of the rare places where, with some
4 effort, you can still experience the sounds of nature without
5 pollution from manmade noise. Allowing more gunfire along the
6 rivers would destroy the perception of solitude for several
7 miles along the corridors. Likewise, opening new areas to
8 ATVs, racers, and snowmobiles would severely degrade the
9 experience for anyone hoping to be present in nature without --

10 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

11 **ROBERT BINNIE, COMMENTER:** -- the sounds of
12 (indiscernible - simultaneous speech). As a public landowner,
13 I strongly object to the takings for myself and others that
14 this change in rules would entail. Thanks for your
15 consideration.

16 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you for your comment,
17 Robert. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your hand.

18 All right, our next commenter is number 50, Elaine
19 Morgan. Elaine, if you are with us tonight and would like to
20 provide a comment, please let us know by raising your hand.
21 You can find the raise-hand feature at the bottom of your
22 participant list or by hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad.
23 Elaine Morgan.

24 Okay, our next commenter is number 51, Kneeland Taylor.
25 I see Kneeland has his hand raised. Hi, Kneeland.

1 **KNEELAND TAYLOR, COMMENTER:** Can you hear me?

2 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Yes, sir, we can. Could you
3 please spell your first and last name for the record?

4 **KNEELAND TAYLOR, COMMENTER:** So my first name is
5 Kneeland. It's spelled K-n-e-e-l-a-n-d. The last name is
6 Taylor, and it's T-a-y-l-o-r.

7 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great, thank you. All right,
8 I am going to start your two-minute timer now.

9 **KNEELAND TAYLOR, COMMENTER:** Well, I've lived in Alaska
10 for 46 years, and I've been hiking and mountaineering all over
11 the state, including in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. I
12 did that many times, but as recently as this summer, I floated,
13 I hiked, I biked, and I picked mushrooms in the wildlife
14 refuge.

15 But I want to comment, because for more than 20 years, I
16 have been involved in advocating for restrictions on trapping
17 that would protect dogs from traps. I have personally spoken
18 with dozens of people whose dogs have been caught in traps. I
19 spoke with one man whose dog was killed in a conibear trap
20 while the dog was on the leash that the man was holding.

21 I have personally submitted several proposals to the
22 Alaska Board of Game that would provide for no-trapping buffers
23 near roads and trails and homes. I haven't been alone in doing
24 that. Many other people have submitted proposals along those
25 lines to our Department of Fish and Game, the Board of Game,

1 but almost all of these proposals have been rejected.

2 I still recall testifying one day in support of one of
3 those proposals, having provided all sorts of information on
4 dogs being trapped on specific trails, and the chairman of the
5 Board of Game simply said, in voting no, he didn't see a
6 problem.

7 The current Kenai rule provides some protection. It
8 establishes a mile buffer from roads, and it provides for no
9 trapping in the Skilak wildlife area, and it doesn't allow
10 traps with teeth, and there are some other mitigating factors,
11 too.

12 The City of Anchorage, in May of 2019, passed an
13 ordinance establishing no trapping buffers around developed
14 trails, trailheads, and campgrounds. I mention that because it
15 was -- we won on a nine-to-two vote. These are responsible
16 elected officials here in the State of Alaska who understand
17 that the Board of Game is deaf to the public on this issue. So
18 also is the commissioner, who spoke earlier today. He spoke of
19 biology. This is a public safety issue. Our dogs are
20 property. We care for our dogs.

21 Finally, I just want to say I oppose these changes,
22 because, as a practical matter, we're going to end up with no
23 buffers and lots of dogs getting killed --

24 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** (Indiscernible)

25 **KNEELAND TAYLOR, COMMENTER:** -- as they accompany their

1 owners. This is a fact. Also --

2 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** You've reached your time,
3 Kneeland. I'm going to have to ask you to wrap up your
4 comment. We're put you back on mute.

5 **KNEELAND TAYLOR, COMMENTER:** Okay.

6 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you very much for
7 commenting tonight. All right, our next commenter is
8 number 52, Elizabeth Bortolotto. Elizabeth, if you are out
9 there with us tonight, please raise your hand by using the
10 feature at the bottom of your participant list or by hitting
11 star-9. Elizabeth Bortolotto.

12 Okay, our next commenter is number 53, Joe Houde. I see
13 Joe has his hand raised. Hi, Joe.

14 **JOE HOUDE, COMMENTER:** Hi.

15 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Hi. Could you please spell
16 your first and last name for the record?

17 **JOE HOUDE, COMMENTER:** Yeah, first name Joe, J-o-e, last
18 name H-o-u-d-e.

19 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, I'm going
20 to start your two-minute timer now.

21 **JOE HOUDE, COMMENTER:** Thank you. Like many others,
22 everyone else who's been commenting, I thoroughly enjoy the
23 outdoors. I especially agreed with the comments made by Robert
24 Binnie a few moments ago. I urge you to just reject these
25 regulation changes that roll back protections for bears and any

1 other animals in the refuge.

2 Refuges are places of safety for wild animals, not
3 playgrounds for trophy hunters. Allowing the shooting of
4 bears, after baiting them with food, is deeply cruel and
5 ecologically destructive.

6 Again, please do not overturn these critical protections
7 for the wild animals who call these millions of acres in the
8 refuge, home. Please don't be cruel. We don't need that. We
9 don't need takings. We need givings with nature and
10 compatibility. Please reject the draconian proposed regulation
11 changes. Thank you.

12 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Joe, for your
13 comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your
14 hand.

15 Our next commenter is number 54, Tony DeLia. Tony, if
16 you are with us tonight and would like to provide a comment,
17 please raise your hand by using the feature at the bottom of
18 your participant list or by hitting star-9 on your telephone
19 keypad. Tony DeLia.

20 Okay, our next commenter is number 55, Marguerite
21 Feldmann. Marguerite, if you are with us tonight and would
22 like to make a comment, please access the raise-hand feature at
23 the bottom of your participant list. You can find your
24 participant list by hovering your cursor over the bottom of the
25 Zoom screen or by hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad.

1 Marguerite Feldmann.

2 Okay, I'm going to move to our next commenter, number 56,
3 Sa Re. If you are with us tonight and would like to provide a
4 comment, please let us know by raising your hand by using the
5 feature at the bottom of your participant list or by hitting
6 star-9 on your telephone keypad. Sa Re.

7 Okay, I'm going to move to our next commenter, number 57,
8 Celeste Watt. Celeste, if you are with us tonight and would
9 like to comment, please raise your hand by using the raise-hand
10 feature in your participant list or by hitting star-9 on your
11 telephone keypad. Celeste Watt.

12 Okay, our next commenter is number 58, Michele Mattingly.
13 Michele, if you are with us tonight and would like to provide a
14 comment, please raise your hand by using the raise-hand feature
15 on your participant list or by hitting star-9 on your telephone
16 keypad. Michele Mattingly.

17 Okay, our next commenter is number 59, Eva Lanker. Eva,
18 if you are with us and would like to provide a comment tonight,
19 please let us know by raising your hand, by using the Zoom
20 feature at the bottom of the participant list or by hitting
21 star-9 on your telephone keypad. Eva Lanker.

22 Okay, our next commenter is number 60, Siobhan Gilchrist.
23 Siobhan, if you are with us tonight and would like to provide a
24 comment, please let us know by raising your hand using the
25 raise-hand feature at the bottom of your participant list or by

1 hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad. Siobhan Gilchrist.

2 Okay, our next commenter is number 61, Sue Nusbaum. Sue,
3 if you are out there tonight and would like to provide a
4 comment, please raise your hand and let us know. You can raise
5 your hand by using the feature at the bottom of your
6 participant list or by hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad.
7 Sue Nusbaum.

8 Okay, our next commenter is number 62, Jamala Mackin.
9 Jamala, if you are with us tonight and would like to provide a
10 comment, please raise your hand by using the feature at the
11 bottom of the Zoom participant list or by hitting star-9 on
12 your telephone keypad. Jamala Mackin.

13 Okay, our next commenter is number 63, Carol Hadley.
14 Carol, if you are with us tonight and would like to provide a
15 comment, please raise your hand and let us know. You can raise
16 your hand by using the feature at the bottom of the Zoom
17 participant list or by hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad.
18 Carol Hadley.

19 Okay, our next commenter is number 64, Richard Johnston.
20 Richard, if you are still with us tonight and would like to
21 make a comment, please raise your hand and let us know by
22 accessing the raise-hand feature at the bottom of your Zoom
23 participant list or by hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad.
24 Richard Johnston. Let's see, here's a phone caller. This
25 might be Richard. I'm going to ask to unmute this person. To

1 unmute yourself, phone caller, you hit star-6.

2 **RICHARD JOHNSTON, COMMENTER:** Hello?

3 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Hello.

4 **RICHARD JOHNSTON, COMMENTER:** Are we -- am I with you?

5 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** You are. Can you hear me all
6 right?

7 **RICHARD JOHNSTON, COMMENTER:** I can.

8 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Okay, could you please spell
9 out your first and last name for the record?

10 **RICHARD JOHNSTON, COMMENTER:** Yeah, my name is Richard,
11 R-i-c-h-a-r-d, Johnston, common spelling, J-o-h-n-s-t-o-n.

12 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Excellent, thank you. All
13 right. I'm going to start your two-minute timer now.

14 **RICHARD JOHNSTON, COMMENTER:** Thank you. I would like to
15 oppose the proposed changes to -- on -- for these proposals for
16 the Kenai Refuge trapping program and the bear baiting program,
17 or also known as a predator control program. The access
18 changes in the plan (indiscernible) changes for the upper Kenai
19 River and Russian River.

20 My comments are based on 44 years of residence in the
21 Kenai Peninsula, and 34 years on the staff of the Kenai
22 Wildlife Refuge from 1979 to 2013. I am heavily involved in
23 the management programs, permit development, management
24 resource, and wildlife management, and aviation law enforcement
25 programs.

1 I was extensively involved with the implementation and
2 compliance with the trapping program and the Kenai bear baiting
3 program. And I had a lot of prepared comments, and I have
4 submitted 27 pages of comments that will kind of supplement
5 that. But what I'd like to -- I'd like to reiterate some of
6 the, you know, personal stories like the one gentleman did
7 about his inability to get through to the Board of Game.

8 But I would just like to say, as a refuge officer, you
9 know, I'm the one that arrived when, you know, another
10 cooperating trapper reported, you know, three eagles caught in
11 a set of traps that had been abandoned and left out for three
12 weeks, and just caught by their little pinky. So if they'd,
13 you know, let the eagles go in time, they would have been able
14 to survive.

15 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

16 **RICHARD JOHNSTON, COMMENTER:** I'm the one that, you know,
17 sort of the person who just lost -- you know, had a dog lose a
18 leg in a trap. And I'd like to say that, you know, these
19 regulations, like a lot of aviation regulations and other
20 regulations, are written in the blood, and they're written in
21 the blood of wildlife that's been injured on the wildlife
22 refuge.

23 I can literally think of hundreds, dozens, and probably
24 hundreds of cases of both intentional and unintentional
25 nontarget species, pets, and public safety issues associated

1 with trapping. And the refuge trapping permit was necessary to
2 try to mitigate these things. If it wasn't for the refuge
3 trapping permit, I doubt very seriously if there would even be
4 a trapping program now on the refuge, and I think that --

5 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Please wrap up your comment,
6 Richard.

7 **RICHARD JOHNSTON, COMMENTER:** Okay. And I think that
8 these proposals, to roll them back, are primarily politically
9 motivated, not supported by science, and the environmental
10 documents have not been established to support it. And
11 that's -- and I'm finished.

12 And may I make one other comment, just unrelated to this?
13 I noticed earlier this evening that a Safari Club International
14 person --

15 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** (Indiscernible - simultaneous
16 speech)

17 **RICHARD JOHNSTON, COMMENTER:** -- commented -- I beg your
18 pardon?

19 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** I'll put you back on mute.
20 Thank you for your comment. We appreciate it, and I'm going to
21 lower your hand.

22 We have to move on to our next commenter, number 66,
23 Ronald Jorgensen. Oh, that is wrong. The next commenter is
24 number 65, Virginia Bottorff. Virginia, if you are with us
25 tonight and would like to provide a comment, please raise your

1 hand by accessing the raise-hand feature on your Zoom
2 participant list or by hitting star-9 on your telephone keypad.
3 Virginia Bottorff.

4 Okay, our next commenter is number 66, Ronald Jorgensen.
5 Ronald, if you are with us tonight and would like to provide a
6 comment, please raise your hand by using the raise-hand feature
7 at the bottom of your Zoom participant list or by hitting
8 star-9 on your telephone keypad. Ronald Jorgensen.

9 Okay, our next commenter is number 67, and the
10 information they provided was C.O. If this is you, please let
11 us know by raising your hand if you would like to provide a
12 comment. C.O., if that is you, please access that raise-hand
13 feature.

14 Okay, I'm going to move to our next commenter, number 68,
15 Lorraine Temple. Hi, Lorraine, I see you've raised your hand.
16 Hello.

17 **LORRAINE TEMPLE, COMMENTER:** Yes, hi. Great.

18 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Please spell your first and
19 last name for the record.

20 **LORRAINE TEMPLE, COMMENTER:** Okay, my name is Lorraine
21 Temple, L-o-r-r-a-i-n-e, Temple, T-e-m-p-l-e.

22 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, I am going
23 to start your two-minute timer now.

24 **LORRAINE TEMPLE, COMMENTER:** Okay. At the age of 24, I
25 arrived in Alaska with a degree in environmental studies from

1 the University of California Santa Barbara, and a head full of
2 adventure and ambition. I never intended on staying, but like
3 many of us, I was hooked.

4 I'm 60 now, and I've spent the last 36 years living on
5 the Kenai Peninsula as a dog musher, commercial fisherman,
6 captain, tour guide, and have created businesses that allowed
7 myself and guests to enjoy what kept me in our great state.

8 I have two homes, one in Homer and one in Cooper Landing,
9 so I straddle the refuge. Living primarily in Cooper Landing
10 for the last seven years, I dread every fall season, when
11 getting out on the trails safely with my dogs is horrifically
12 taken away, as I've heard multitudes of stories of friends'
13 dogs getting trapped, and worse, killed.

14 The one that sticks out in my mind was a young couple
15 that had their first child, that was a puppy, that was caught
16 in a trap and died helplessly in front of them. I decided to
17 get proactive and joined a group of recreational users and
18 trappers to try to figure out what we could do to all enjoy our
19 public lands harmoniously. A trapper in the group said, just
20 go down the road to the refuge; it's safe there, no traps. I
21 pray that holds true for a long time and this rule doesn't
22 pass.

23 My businesses cater to out-of-town guests, and one of the
24 most frequently asked questions is, where can I -- where can we
25 see a bear? I suggest they drive to Skilak Loop Road. But how

1 many bears will there be after seasons of baiting for senseless
2 trophy hunting?

3 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

4 **LORRAINE TEMPLE, COMMENTER:** Certainly, it will decrease
5 opportunities for wildlife photographers who come from around
6 the world. And who wants to hear discharging of firearms along
7 the river? This is unacceptable regarding safety and imposes
8 on their serenity and simple sounds of pure wilderness. If the
9 rule passes, there's inevitably an economic burden to the
10 refuge permittees and related businesses who depend so heavily
11 on our short season to make it, like me.

12 A good friend of mine who is a retired law enforcement on
13 the refuge said the other day, the refuge, as it is, is a
14 trapper's best friend, meaning the trapper training,
15 identification, trap check requirements and setbacks that are
16 in force will keep a well-managed refuge for generations.

17 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Please wrap up your --

18 **LORRAINE TEMPLE, COMMENTER:** I speak for many in our
19 community, but with the expectation [sic] -- please keep the
20 rules just as they are; no changes. Thank you.

21 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Lorraine, for your
22 comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your
23 hand.

24 Okay, our next commenter is number 69, and the
25 information they gave us was M.P. If that is you, please raise

1 your hand and let us know you'd like to provide a comment by
2 using the raise-hand feature in your participant list or
3 hitting star-9 on the telephone keypad. M.P.

4 Okay, I'm going to move to our next commenter, Dawn
5 Zelinski. I see Dawn has her hand raised. I'm going to unmute
6 you. Hi, Dawn.

7 **DAWN ZELINSKI, COMMENTER:** Hi. The spelling of my name
8 is Dawn, D-a-w-n, Zelinski, Z-e-l-i-n-s-k-i.

9 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great.

10 **DAWN ZELINSKI, COMMENTER:** I live in New Jersey, but I've
11 been to Alaska several times, traveling all over the state to
12 see wildlife, from flying into the Katmai National Park, to
13 driving the Dalton Highway up to the Brooks Range, and many
14 places in between, including the Kenai Peninsula.

15 I am adamantly opposed to the rule changes that would
16 allow the baiting and killing of bears, increased trapping, and
17 increased access by humans. The word, refuge, is defined as
18 the condition of being safe or sheltered from pursuit, danger
19 or trouble. By that definition, a wildlife refuge should be
20 protecting wildlife from danger, not making it more dangerous
21 for them.

22 Instead of loosening regulations, the Fish and Wildlife
23 Service should be adding more regulations, ones that would ban
24 all killing of animals on the refuge. Just because there exist
25 despicable people who want to hurt animals for entertainment,

1 does not change the fact that this area should be a sanctuary
2 for wildlife.

3 It is hard to believe that there are people who would
4 look at a beautiful animal and say, wow, I want to take his
5 life away. I can't imagine being that self-centered or that
6 selfish. Animals are not trophies. They are not harvest.
7 They don't exist for us. They exist for themselves. They have
8 lives and families; they care for young. Some do a better job
9 than many humans. We should just be grateful for a chance to
10 see them.

11 So in conclusion, if the Fish and Wildlife Service
12 decides to make the proposed changes, then they also need to
13 change the name of the refuge --

14 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

15 **DAWN ZELINSKI, COMMENTER:** -- maybe something like the
16 Kenai wildlife abuse area, because that's what it would be. It
17 would no longer be a refuge. Thank you.

18 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Dawn, for your
19 comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your
20 hand.

21 All right, our next commenter is number 71, Jordan
22 Vaughan. I see Jordan has his hand raised or her hand raised.
23 Hello.

24 **JORDAN VAUGHAN, COMMENTER:** Hello.

25 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Hi.

1 **JORDAN VAUGHAN, COMMENTER:** Hello, can you hear me?

2 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Yes. All right, could you
3 please spell your first and last name?

4 **JORDAN VAUGHAN, COMMENTER:** Certainly, so first name is
5 Jordan, J-o-r-d-a-n, last name is Vaughan, V, as in Victor,
6 a-u-g-h-a-n, and I am also from Jersey --

7 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** All right.

8 **JORDAN VAUGHAN, COMMENTER:** -- today.

9 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thanks for joining us. All
10 right, I'm going to start your two-minute timer now.

11 **JORDAN VAUGHAN, COMMENTER:** Okay, thank you. This is my
12 first time speaking at such a meeting, but I feel compelled to
13 do so. I'm an outdoorsman, and I care deeply about our
14 national refuges and wilderness, but I'm appalled by these
15 proposed changes.

16 Just so you know, I attended yesterday's meeting as well,
17 and I can stand with those who have spoken passionately, then
18 and tonight, against the proposal. It's entirely unnecessary
19 and unwarranted. The changes conflict with the statutory
20 conservation purposes of the refuge, which were read at the
21 beginning of this meeting.

22 Many people, yesterday and today, including many Alaskans
23 and hunters, have already presented numerous, sound, legal,
24 scientific, economic, and public safety arguments against all
25 of the proposed changes. I won't repeat them. But most of

1 these people have also offered heart-felt appeals for
2 themselves and wildlife, and I urge you to heed them.

3 The Service is not statutorily required to prioritize
4 hunting and mechanized recreation above other uses within the
5 refuge. It also doesn't have to permit more forms of hunting,
6 like bear baiting. We're living in an age of ecological
7 catastrophe with diminished and shrinking wilderness for our
8 wild brethren. Please prioritize the well-being of the
9 wildlife and ecosystems within the refuge. The proposed rules
10 do not do this. This is a national refuge. It belongs to all
11 Americans --

12 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

13 **JORDAN VAUGHAN, COMMENTER:** -- not just Alaskans, and not
14 just hunters and mechanized recreationists, and it does not
15 have to align with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's
16 wishes, contrary to what Mr. Vincent Lang said earlier about
17 ANILCA. Please reject the proposed rule changes. Thank you.

18 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Jordan, for your
19 comment. I'll put you back on mute and lower your hand.

20 All right, our next commenter is number 72, Brett
21 Haverstick. I see Brett has raised his hand. I'm going to
22 unmute him. Hi, Brett.

23 **BRETT HAVERSTICK, COMMENTER:** Hey, Amy, nice job tonight.

24 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you. Could you please
25 spell your first and last name for the record?

1 **BRETT HAVERSTICK, COMMENTER:** Yeah, Brett Haverstick,
2 B-r-e-t-t, Haverstick, H-a-v-e-r-s-t-i-c-k.

3 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** All right, I am going to
4 start your two-minute timer now.

5 **BRETT HAVERSTICK, COMMENTER:** I'm calling in from Montana
6 tonight, proud to be here. This is a federal issue and all
7 Americans need to speak out right now. I strongly oppose the
8 proposed rule for a refuge specific regulations, AK public use
9 on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. This absolutely,
10 unequivocally goes against the stated purpose of the Kenai
11 National Wildlife Refuge, including implementation of ANILCA.
12 I can't stress enough to conserve the fish, wildlife, and their
13 habitats in their natural diversity.

14 I'd like to step out of the box here a little bit tonight
15 and focus on the short-sighted increased public access
16 component of the proposed rule, specifically, mountain bikes.
17 While all public users of the refuge impact wildlife and
18 wildlife habitat security, including hikers, mountain bikes
19 travel at greater speeds and longer distances in any given day;
20 therefore, they negatively impact wildlife even more.

21 Mountain biking is certainly a growing popular group
22 activity, meaning that multiple individuals or groups are
23 together accessing deeper parts of the back country in any
24 given day, and multiplying those negative effects and impacts
25 on wildlife and wildlife habitat security.

1 There's a growing body of peer-reviewed science detailing
2 the negative impacts of recreation on wildlife, particularly,
3 mountain bikes.

4 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

5 **BRETT HAVERSTICK, COMMENTER:** There was a very recent
6 study completed by Naidoo and Burton, 2020, relative effects to
7 recreational activities on a (indiscernible) through a wildlife
8 assemblage, and conservation science and practice. It
9 concluded that grizzly bears and moose are particularly
10 impacted by mountain bikes. Yesterday, it was bicycles; today
11 it's mountain bikes; and tomorrow is e-bikes.

12 I urge the managers of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge
13 to carefully consider the emerging science, which says that
14 mountain bikes are bad for wildlife --

15 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** (Indiscernible) --

16 **BRETT HAVERSTICK, COMMENTER:** -- and all these mountain
17 bikers out there, they should not get a free lunch. We should
18 be talking about their impacts, too. Great job tonight, Amy,
19 and thanks so much for the opportunity to comment.

20 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you for your comment.
21 I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your hand.

22 All right, our next commenter is number 73, Jeneen
23 Beckett. And Jeneen has her hand raised. I'm going to unmute
24 you. Hello.

25 **JENEEN BECKETT, COMMENTER:** Hello.

1 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Hi, Jeneen. Will you --

2 **JENEEN BECKETT, COMMENTER:** It's nice to be here. Thank
3 you very much for holding these meetings. My name is Jeneen,
4 J-e-n-e-e-n, Beckett, B-e-c-k-e-t-t. I'm calling you from
5 Ohio. I'm a taxpayer, and I'm a concerned environmental
6 individual. I personally helped to create the dolphin-safe
7 tuna can, and using the Army Corps of Engineers 404 Wetland
8 Law, I saved 1,000 acres of land in my area.

9 I am very concerned about these changes and proposals.
10 From my understanding, the Wilderness Act was created to create
11 wilderness. I mean, leave it alone totally and create
12 wilderness.

13 I also work in media and work with scientists, and if you
14 look at the actual population in the United States, only
15 five percent of them are hunters, and they are a very organized
16 group, so it seems like they're very vocal. Most of the
17 people -- when polled, most people in the United States do not
18 like hunting, do not want hunting on public lands, but they
19 don't have the ability to speak. So I not only speak for
20 myself, but I probably speak for a lo -- thousands of other
21 people. Plus, with the social media, you are on all
22 different -- you know, Sierra Club, et cetera, et cetera. This
23 is a very visual situation.

24 We had a naturalist in Cleveland, Ohio, and he came and
25 told us that if you take a road and drive it through, just, you

1 know, a thousand acres of wilderness, you don't create two
2 500-acres. You create 200 acres, because when you go -- the
3 perimeters create access to all kinds of disturbances and
4 things in these that (indiscernible) deep woods are affected.

5 This situation to kill the bears so that you can have
6 more ungulates is what they were doing in Yellowstone National
7 Park. You guys at the Fish and Wildlife are there to protect
8 the wildlife. I mean, if -- without you, people could do
9 whatever they want, which is pretty much what this is saying.

10 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

11 **JENEEN BECKETT, COMMENTER:** Just go in there and kill
12 everything. We have an exponential loss of animals and species
13 on this planet, and most people in the United States, if you
14 surveyed them, would say, no, leave it alone; none of this
15 needs to happen. Zinke needs to go some place where the sun
16 doesn't shine.

17 And I thank you very much for listening to us, but most
18 of the people here have said, no, no, no, to any of it, and
19 please listen to us. Thank you for your service, all of you.
20 Appreciate it.

21 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Jeneen. I'm going
22 to put you back on mute and lower your hand.

23 Our next commenter is number 74, Carla Abrams. Carla has
24 her hand raised. I'm going to unmute you. Hi, Carla.

25 **CARLA ABRAMS, COMMENTER:** Hello.

1 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Hi. Could you please spell
2 your first and last name?

3 **CARLA ABRAMS, COMMENTER:** Yes, my name is Carla Abrams,
4 C-a-r-l-a, and then A-b-r-a-m-s.

5 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great.

6 **CARLA ABRAMS, COMMENTER:** I'm calling from Montana, big
7 sky country. Oh, did you start me? Yeah, okay.

8 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Yes.

9 **CARLA ABRAMS, COMMENTER:** Okay, I'm calling from Montana,
10 like a few other folks. This is a national issue, after all.
11 And I am very familiar with Ryan Zinke, and this smacks of him.

12 I'm speaking out today against the proposed new rules. I
13 was just in Alaska. I've traveled there many times. I plan to
14 return. I support Alaska with my hard-earned money. I care
15 about the biodiversity of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge.

16 Do not allow bear baiting on the refuge. Do not allow
17 trapping, unregulated trapping on the refuge, and limit
18 industrial recreation on the refuge, including what that guy
19 just said about mountain bikes, which is gradually going to
20 e-bikes, which we are also dealing with in the state of Montana
21 right now.

22 So I feel a refuge is shelter or protection from danger
23 or distress, a place that provides protection or shelter. And
24 the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge is a gem in the 50 states,
25 and we need to protect it. I oppose these new rules. Thank

1 you very much.

2 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Carla. I am going
3 to put you back on mute and lower your hand.

4 Our next commenter is number 75, Chadd Charland. Chadd,
5 you have your hand raised. I'm going to unmute you. Hello.

6 **CHADD CHARLAND, COMMENTER:** Hello.

7 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Could you please spell your
8 first and last name for the record?

9 **CHADD CHARLAND, COMMENTER:** Sure. My name is Chadd,
10 C-h-a-d-d, Charland, C-h-a-r-l-a-n-d. I wish to speak out
11 against the proposed new rule changes, which would allow the
12 cruel and unethical practice, permitting hunters to shoot and
13 kill brown bears over piles of bait, open more of the refuge to
14 trapping with fewer restrictions, which would indiscriminately
15 kill more wildlife, reduce the abundance and diversity of
16 wildlife, and cause untold suffering for animals that die
17 slowly for days in traps, and more access for snowmobiles,
18 bicycles, and ATVs in nonwilderness portions of the Kenai
19 National Would Refuge which would further stress the wildlife.

20 Instead, FWS needs to protect wildlife on the Kenai by
21 prohibiting bear baiting of any kind, banning trapping
22 altogether, and limiting recreation so as to lessen human
23 impacts on the land and its inhabitants.

24 I am not anti-hunting nor am I anti-recreation. I am,
25 however, anti-barbarism, anti-reckless recreation, and this new

1 rule would promote both. Our national wildlife refuges should
2 be managed primarily as wildlife refuges. It's right there in
3 the name.

4 At the outset of this presentation, when discussing
5 Kenai's founding and mission, the protection of native wildlife
6 was the preeminent objective. These proposed rules attempt to
7 obliterate that mission. Wildlife should take prominence in
8 how these areas are used, and this proposed rule would abuse
9 wildlife and diminish their presence.

10 I hope to visit Alaska and Kenai one day, and when I do,
11 I want to see it rich with an abundance of wild animals, the
12 way the land is supposed to be, not as a degraded target range
13 for trophy hunters and --

14 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

15 **CHADD CHARLAND, COMMENTER:** -- drag strip for motorized
16 thrill seekers. Thank you.

17 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Chadd. I'm going
18 to put you back on mute and lower your hand.

19 Okay, our next commenter is number 76, Katherine Becher.
20 Katherine, if you are with us tonight and would like to provide
21 comment, please raise your hand by using the feature at the
22 bottom of your Zoom screen or by hitting star-9 on your
23 telephone keypad. Katherine Becher.

24 **AMANDA BIEDERMANN, FACILITATOR:** Hi, Amy. It looks like
25 we don't have Katherine Becher on the line. I do see that

1 people have their hands raised, and they would like to comment.

2 I just want to note a few things quickly first.

3 So what we are going to do, just quickly, because we did
4 have them on our preregistered list, is that we are going to
5 quickly go back to Simone St. Clare, and also Kevin Petty.
6 These are our last two commenters who are on our preregistered
7 list. We called them earlier. However, Simone had the issue
8 with her microphone and Kevin joined late, so we're just going
9 to give them an opportunity, quickly, if they want to comment,
10 to use that raise-hand feature, and then we will move into our
11 other commenters.

12 For our other commenters, I do want to stress that,
13 tonight, at this point, since we have ended our preregistered
14 list, we're not going to go back and accept comments from
15 anyone else on our preregistered list who has already
16 commented. We are going to focus just now on commenters who
17 have not gotten the opportunity to comment tonight, so please
18 do keep that in mind, that we will not call on repeat
19 commenters, but we will just look for new commenters who want
20 to offer a comment tonight.

21 So, Amy, I'll turn it back over to you quickly, if you
22 want to see if -- let's see, Simone St. Clare, I think you
23 called in through the phone, and then Kevin Petty, if you want
24 to offer your comment still, to use that raise-hand feature.
25 Thank you.

1 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Okay, Simone, if you are out
2 there and would like to provide a comment and you're dialing in
3 on the phone, please hit star-9 to raise your hand. I don't
4 see you.

5 I'm also looking for Kevin Petty, if you are with us. I
6 see Kevin. All right, I'm going to unmute you, Kevin. Hello.

7 **KEVIN PETTY, COMMENTER:** Hello, it's Kevin Petty,
8 K-e-v-i-n P-e-t-t-y, in Arizona.

9 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, I will
10 start your two-minute timer now.

11 **KEVIN PETTY, COMMENTER:** Thank you. I oppose any
12 trapping or baiting in wildlife refuges. Kenai is a wildlife
13 refuge, and a refuge is defined as a place of protection. The
14 proposed changes will cause Kenai wildlife to be unprotected.

15 This (indiscernible) allow bear baiting and trapping in a
16 refuge. It is akin to allowing hunters to shoot and trap
17 animals in a zoo or animal sanctuary. Refuges are meant to
18 protect animals, not to encourage human destructive tendencies.

19 Likewise, Kenai cannot be both a refuge and a
20 recreational facility. Wildlife refuges are implicitly shelters
21 from humans and human activities. What else would wildlife
22 need refuge from, except humans, guns, and vehicles.

23 Kenai needs to prohibit all forms of human violence to
24 animals; otherwise, it should be called Kenai hunting range.
25 Kenai should be a protected refuge from human encroachment and

1 human violence, and without such refuges, American wildlife is
2 lost.

3 Most of us humans want wildlife to be safe, and if we
4 cannot protect them from malicious humans in cities and
5 countryside, we can console ourselves that at least some
6 animals are safe in the refuges. And to those humans who want
7 to get at Kenai wildlife, I say, you can satisfy your bloodlust
8 and greed in many other places other than Kenai. Thank you.

9 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Kevin, for your
10 comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your
11 hand.

12 Okay, it looks like we have a phone caller, 8400. I'm
13 going to unmute you to see if you are Simone. To unmute
14 yourself on the phone, please hit star-6. Hello?

15 **CHARLES ANDERSON, COMMENTER:** Hello, this is Charles
16 Anderson.

17 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** All right, Charles, we'll let
18 you go. You have two minutes, but please spell your first and
19 last name for the record, if you could.

20 **CHARLES ANDERSON, COMMENTER:** Of course. Charles,
21 C-h-a-r-l-e-s; last name Anderson, A-n-d-e-r-s-o-n.

22 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, I will
23 start your two-minute timer now.

24 **CHARLES ANDERSON, COMMENTER:** Thank you very much. Good
25 evening. My name is Charles Anderson. I'm an Alaska addict.

1 I live in Washington State, but my heart is in the spirit of
2 Alaska.

3 I speak as one who thrives on the American dream. I have
4 lived a charmed life, which through tireless work, moved from
5 being broke to founding a high-tech company worth a fortune.
6 Only in America, but also only in America, does our soul soar
7 on the concept of frontier. Wild spaces, untouched by human
8 hands, infuse the soul of all Americans, evidencing that there
9 are spaces that we can aspire to, spaces that we can leave to
10 future generations, spaces left untouched forever.

11 Imagine a world thoroughly picked over, every piece
12 handled, every piece touched. What then will inspire our
13 future generations of entrepreneurs?

14 The Kenai National Refuge is one of those few remaining
15 sacred pieces. If we rip that away, then what is left? What
16 then is left for our children, who aspire to innovate --

17 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

18 **CHARLES ANDERSON, COMMENTER:** -- but lack the inspiration
19 of frontier? America is founded on frontier. I do not have to
20 visit it. I do not have to touch it. I -- just knowing that it
21 is there is enough. Please protect our untouched spaces.

22 Please reject the proposed changes and regulations, if not for
23 the animals, if not for me, then for your children. Thank you.

24 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Charles. I'm
25 going to put you back on mute and lower your hand.

1 Okay, I'm going to our raised hands in the participant
2 list now. Mike Amos, you are the first on the list. Mike, can
3 you hear me?

4 **MIKE AMOS, COMMENTER:** I can.

5 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** All right, can you please
6 spell your first and last name for the record?

7 **MIKE AMOS, COMMENTER:** Mike, M-i-k-e, Amos, A-m-o-s.

8 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, I am going
9 to start your two-minute timer now.

10 **MIKE AMOS, COMMENTER:** Thank you. I'm strongly opposed
11 to the rule changes, yeah, about baiting the brown bears and
12 removal of trapping regulations. However, I am in favor of
13 allowing bikes on the trails in the Kenai Wildlife Refuge.
14 Allowing the bikes on the trails will allow people to access
15 more of the refuge.

16 I'm the owner of a bike rental business in Cooper
17 Landing, Alaska. And those of you who are unfamiliar with
18 Cooper Landing, the Nat -- Kenai National Wildlife Refuge is
19 our backyard. The refuge is about seven miles from our house.
20 And my business is very tourist-oriented.

21 And what kind of a message would we be sending if
22 visitors and tourists visiting the refuge start to come across
23 animal carcasses left in unchecked traps? Does this send a
24 message that we don't care about our wildlife, that we just
25 don't care about what anybody does?

1 It stated that the proposed rule changes will have little
2 or no economic impact, when -- in fact, when the tourists stop
3 coming due to the disregard for our wildlife, there will be a
4 definite economic impact.

5 Cooper Landing's impact -- economy has suffered enough
6 just in the past three summers. 2018, we had a bad salmon run,
7 and --

8 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

9 **MIKE AMOS, COMMENTER:** -- in 2019, we had the Swan Lake
10 fire. In 2020, we have COVID. I mean, we don't need another
11 reason for our economy to be harmed anymore than it already
12 has, by allowing these rules to be changed. Thank you.

13 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Mike, for your
14 comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your
15 hand.

16 All right, the next commenter with their hand raised is
17 Rupert Scribner. Rupert, I'm going to unmute you. Hello, can
18 you hear me? Hello, Rupert, can you hear me? You might be
19 having some microphone issues on your end. It looks like
20 you're unmuted, but I can't hear you. Make sure you've joined
21 with the computer audio. You can check that at the bottom of
22 your Zoom screen in the mute -- there's an up arrow. Hi,
23 Rupert.

24 All right, I'm going to put you back on mute, Rupert, and
25 we'll see if we can get that issue fixed. If you could message

1 Clayton McGee, if you're having some technical difficulties.
2 We can see if we can get that figured out.

3 All right, our next person on the list with their hand
4 raised is Kerri Quinn (ph). Kerri, I'm going to unmute you.
5 Hello?

6 **KERRI QUINN, COMMENTER:** Hello, can you hear me?

7 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Yes, we can, thank you.

8 **KERRI QUINN, COMMENTER:** Thank you, Amanda, you're doing
9 a very good job tonight. I would like to, though, however,
10 extend my disappointment about the cancellation of tomorrow
11 night's comment period. I think it prevents many people from
12 airing their concerns about this very important issue.

13 I would like it to be noted that I do not support these
14 changes. I do believe they benefit a small group of people,
15 not the community at large, and not the tourists who come to
16 view wildlife and support our local economy.

17 For 30 years, on and off, I was a resident of Soldotna,
18 and lived within a mile of the Kenai Refuge. My kids fished,
19 hiked, biked, skied, kayaked, and mushroom hunted on the
20 refuge. The thing that was interesting about these changes,
21 and the biggest concerns were that, first of all, the mile
22 buffer between the trap and the trailheads being lost.

23 Traps could legally now be placed in these areas where
24 children and dogs recreate. As you know, dogs and kids don't
25 always stay on a path, and I would hate to see someone get

1 mangled or disabled as a result of a trap.

2 With regard to trapping, there is no accountability for
3 trappers anymore if these rules go through -- these changes go
4 through. They won't be required to mark their traps. It's
5 going to be harder for law enforcement to cite violations.
6 These traps could even be left out after the season, and if
7 that's the case, obviously, more opportunity for a public
8 safety hazard.

9 There is no trap check requirement. These could be left
10 for weeks and animals could be left to die inhumanely.

11 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

12 **KERRI QUINN, COMMENTER:** The traps and snares could be
13 allowed to be placed on top of exposed bait, causing birds and
14 small prey to be killed and disabled.

15 The refuge is a place of safety, and I think the question
16 we need to ask ourselves is, is this safe for just a few people
17 who want to hunt, trophy hunt, predominantly, especially over
18 bear baiting? This is an abomination, I believe, that hunters
19 can't do a better job hunting; they have to bait a bear in
20 order to get it. The refuge --

21 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** (Indiscernible) --

22 **KERRI QUINN, COMMENTER:** -- is a safe place for animals
23 and for humans, and I request that you do not support these
24 changes. Thank you.

25 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Kerri, for your

1 comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your
2 hand.

3 All right, the next person with their hand raised is
4 Caroline Brouwer. I'm going to unmute you, Caroline. Hello?

5 **CAROLINE BROUWER, COMMENTER:** Hi, can you hear me?

6 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Yes, ma'am, we can. Can you
7 please spell your first and last name for us?

8 **CAROLINE BROUWER, COMMENTER:** It's Caroline,
9 C-a-r-o-l-i-n-e, Brouwer, B-r-o-u-w-e-r, and congratulations on
10 getting that right; nobody does.

11 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Excellent. All right, I will
12 start your two-minute timer now.

13 **CAROLINE BROUWER, COMMENTER:** Thank you. So I'm the vice
14 president of government affairs for the National Wildlife
15 Refuge Association, and I live in Rockville, Maryland. I
16 visited the Kenai Refuge three times in the last four years,
17 and it is a stunning and special place. I was also scheduled
18 to speak tomorrow night before being cancelled.

19 The Refuge Association advocates on behalf of the 568
20 national wildlife refuges across the country, and we strongly
21 urge the Fish and Wildlife Service to rescind these
22 incompatible regulations.

23 The proposed regulations for the Kenai Refuge violate
24 numerous federal laws and policies, including the Refuge
25 Administration and Refuge Improvement Acts, ANILCA, and the

1 Master Memorandum of Understanding with Alaska Fish and Game.

2 The Refuge Administration Improvement Act affirmed the
3 compatibility standard by which a refuge manager may permit an
4 activity. Trapping is only a compatible use if participants
5 meet certain requirements, like obtaining a permit, and
6 attending an orientation, and marking their traps. These
7 requirements prevent conflicts with other users, and killing
8 nontarget species, like birds and dogs.

9 And it's the same for bear baiting. Baiting conditions
10 bears to human food, which is the opposite of the naturalness
11 that is inherent to a national wildlife refuge, and it
12 increases likelihood of human and bear conflict.

13 The Service's violation of ANILCA ignores that the Kenai
14 Refuge be managed to conserve a natural diversity of species,
15 notably, brown bears, wolves, and other furbearers. Kenai's
16 ANILCA purposes do not include subsistence, but do include
17 scientific research, interpretation, environmental education,
18 and land management training, and also compatible opportunities
19 for fish and wildlife oriented recreation.

20 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

21 **CAROLINE BROUWER, COMMENTER:** Hunting and fishing are two
22 of the big (indiscernible) compatible uses on a refuge system
23 unit, but they are not the most important two. Wildlife
24 watching, photography, environmental education and
25 interpretation are just as important, and they are being

1 ignored in this document.

2 Kenai Refuge scientists should be addressing a 21st
3 century problems, like climate change and wildfires and
4 biological diversity, not debating the 19th century trophy
5 mentality that only values wildlife for their hides and horns.
6 I urge you to reconsider these regulations. Thank you.

7 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Caroline, for your
8 comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your
9 hand.

10 All right, the next person on our list is Jim Herbert.
11 Jim, I'm going to unmute you. You might be muted on your end
12 as well, so make sure that you've unmuted yourself.

13 **JIM HERBERT, COMMENTER:** How's that?

14 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** That works. Hi, Jim.

15 **JIM HERBERT, COMMENTER:** Good evening.

16 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Please spell your first and
17 last name for us.

18 **JIM HERBERT, COMMENTER:** Good evening. My name is Jim
19 Herbert, J-i-m H-e-r-b-e-r-t.

20 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great.

21 **JIM HERBERT, COMMENTER:** I'm a 45-year resident of the
22 Kenai Peninsula and a regular user of the refuge. By Alaska
23 standards, the Kenai Refuge is a suburban refuge, due to it's
24 proximity to Anchorage, and this is a source of both its
25 pleasures and problems, as reflected in many comments.

1 With regards to the proposals, I support the existing
2 trapping program, as it offers better stewardship of
3 furbearers, and sort of reject the changes.

4 Hunting brown bears over bait is a poor idea, as it
5 habituates brown bears to humans and their food, and certainly
6 violates the concept of fair chase. I also believe this is an
7 ill-advised moose management tool. Extending the shooting
8 season along the river does not seem prudent for both safety
9 and aesthetic reasons. I am in favor of the limited bicycle
10 proposals, as presented, but not the motorized vehicle
11 proposal.

12 Lastly, I believe the -- that political expediency by
13 state officials have motivated these proposals, and, for the
14 most part, they're not supported by sound science.

15 And both Amy and Amanda, I want to compliment you both.
16 You'd both make great kindergarten teachers. You've got the
17 voice, the delivery, and the patience to deal with us all.
18 Good night.

19 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Jim. I appreciate
20 your comment. I'll put you back on mute and lower your hand.

21 All right, our next commenter with their hand raised is
22 Regina Lennox. Regina, I'm going to unmute you. Hello?

23 **REGINA LENNOX, COMMENTER:** Hello.

24 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Hi. Can you spell your first
25 and last name for the record?

1 **REGINA LENNOX, COMMENTER:** Yes, it is Regina,
2 R-e-g-i-n-a, Lennox, L-e-n-n-o-x, and I'm commenting on behalf
3 of Safari Club International.

4 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Excellent, thank you. All
5 right, I will start your two-minute timer now.

6 **REGINA LENNOX, COMMENTER:** SCI and its 45,000 members,
7 including many Alaskans, generally support the proposed rules,
8 because it is consistent with ANILCA and other laws. Comments
9 suggesting that hunting should not take place on the refuge are
10 simply incorrect. ANILCA expressly stated congress's intent
11 to, quote, preserve wilderness and resource values and related
12 recreational opportunities, including but not limited to sport
13 hunting.

14 The refuge's comprehensive conservation plan explains,
15 quote, ANILCA authorizes traditional activities, such as
16 hunting and trapping, in accordance with state and federal law,
17 and the refuge would establish five enumerated purposes,
18 including, quote, providing opportunities for wildlife oriented
19 recreation, which includes hunting. Thus, permitting state
20 authorized harvest of brown bears over bait is fully consistent
21 with the Kenai Refuge's purposes.

22 The proposal provides an additional wildlife oriented
23 hunting opportunity in accordance with state law. To be clear,
24 hunting bears over bait already takes place on the refuge. The
25 proposal simply extends the species, not the area or anything

1 else.

2 For the same reasons, SCI requests that the Service
3 provide for additional hunting opportunities and better align
4 with state regulations, by allowing the limited winter harvest
5 of wolf, coyote, and lynx on the Skilak area, and limiting the
6 restriction on use of firearms along the Kenai and Russian
7 Rivers to June, July and August.

8 Last, although commenters have criticized the proposal to
9 authorize the harvest of brown bears over bait, under ANILCA,
10 conservation of a range of species in their natural diversity
11 is one of the refuge's five purposes.

12 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

13 **REGINA LENNOX, COMMENTER:** Under this provision, the
14 state is required to manage species in an appropriate balance.
15 One of ANILCA's sponsors, Alaska Senator Ted Stevens, made it
16 explicitly clear that conservation of species in their natural
17 diversity, quote, encompasses the benefit of the use of such
18 populations by man is part of the balanced management program
19 mandated by ANILCA and other applicable law.

20 Accordingly, the state adopts harvest quotas and harvest
21 methods for all species, to manage populations of those species
22 to ensure the conservation of all, and for these reasons, we
23 support the proposal.

24 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you for your comment,
25 Regina. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your hand.

1 And the next person on our list with their hand raised is
2 Helen Clough. Helen, I'm going to unmute you. Hello, Helen.

3 **HELEN CLOUGH, COMMENTER:** Hello, can you hear me?

4 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** I can. Can you please spell
5 your first and last name for us?

6 **HELEN CLOUGH, COMMENTER:** Helen, H-e-l-e-n, Clough,
7 C-l-o-u-g-h.

8 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, I am going
9 to start your two-minute timer now.

10 **HELEN CLOUGH, COMMENTER:** I am a hunter, trapper, and dog
11 owner, and have been a resident of Alaska for over 50 years.
12 The proposed changes are inconsistent with the Alaska National
13 Interest Lands Conservation Act, both refuge purposes, and the
14 purposes of the comprehensive conservation planning process,
15 and the Refuge Improvement Act, especially regarding priority
16 public uses and refuge compatibility.

17 There are no compatibility determinations for any of the
18 changes. The laws require that all activities over which Fish
19 and Wildlife Service has authority, which includes hunting and
20 trapping, must be compatible with the purposes for which the
21 refuge was established. Public review of compatibility of
22 determinations is also required.

23 The proposed changes to the trapping regulations favor
24 trapping over the other recreational uses of the Kenai Refuge,
25 and public safety of visitors, especially children and dogs,

1 and it's not compatible.

2 Brown bear hunting over bait is not compatible, again for
3 public safety reasons, in addition to others. Brown bear
4 hunting over bait in close proximity to various human
5 settlements is a bad idea. Bears that associate humans with
6 food are likely to go seeking food at cabins, oil field
7 developments, and local communities.

8 I've lived and worked in Alaska brown bear country most
9 of my life, and it has always been the policy of Fish and Game
10 not to relocate problem bears, because they just return to the
11 source of garbage. This summer, while these regulations were
12 out for public review, Fish and Game staff is quoted in an
13 article in the Anchorage paper saying, quote, Kenai -- people
14 on the Kenai Peninsula should avoid attracting bears with
15 garbage, as they place not only themselves, but others at risk.

16 What is this? It seems rather inconsistent with the
17 position of the state on the proposed rule documents

18 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

19 **HELEN CLOUGH, COMMENTER:** I strongly object to the
20 proposed changes in the trapping regulations and allowing brown
21 bear hunting over bait, and thank you very much.

22 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Helen, for your
23 comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your
24 hand.

25 The next person with their hand raised to provide a

1 comment is Anna Mueller. Anna, I'm going to unmute you.

2 Hello.

3 **ANNA MUELLER, COMMENTER:** Yes, hello. Can you hear me?

4 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** I can. Can you please spell
5 your first and last name for us?

6 **ANNA MUELLER, COMMENTER:** Yes. Before I spell my name,
7 can I just ask a question? Because I had registered for
8 tomorrow's hearing and we got this notification just this
9 afternoon that that hearing had been cancelled, though without
10 any explanation. Maybe you explained it earlier in this -- in
11 today's hearing, but why was tomorrow's hearing cancelled?

12 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** We are only taking comments
13 right now, not questions, so if you have a comment, we can
14 start your timer.

15 **ANNA MUELLER, COMMENTER:** All right, I start my comment,
16 then, and maybe I'll spell my name first. So my name is
17 A-n-n-a; last name Mueller, M-u-e-l-l-e-r.

18 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** All right.

19 **ANNA MUELLER, COMMENTER:** I (indiscernible) with my
20 prepared comment first.

21 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you.

22 **ANNA MUELLER, COMMENTER:** So (indiscernible) here in
23 Soldotna for 25 years. I would like to speak as a local
24 resident, but also as one of the 330 million people who own
25 this national wildlife refuge. I would also like to offer the

1 perspective of a person who grew up in Europe.

2 I came to the Kenai Peninsula in my mid twenties. It was
3 an awe-inspiring transformative experience. It reminded me so
4 much of my old country, Austria, the mountains, lakes, rivers,
5 but (indiscernible - audio breakup) to that it also offered
6 something that Europe no longer has; the space to support a
7 truly intact ecosystem that includes a full compliment of top
8 carnivores. This has become such a rare and precious thing.

9 It cannot be reiterated enough that the Kenai National
10 Wildlife Refuge was established for the explicit purpose of
11 conserving wildlife populations in their natural diversity.
12 Allowing brown bears to be killed over bait takes us further
13 down the road of predator control, in total contradiction of
14 natural diversity. If anything, given the ever intensifying
15 impact of climate change, wildlife management should become
16 more, not less, conservative.

17 When I listened to yesterday's hearing, I was struck by
18 two things. Out of the 18 comments I heard, 16 were in strong
19 opposition to the proposed changes. There was only a single
20 voice in support, which came from the Safari Club
21 International, of elephant and lion trophy fame, the very
22 organization who gave thousands of dollars in campaign
23 contributions to Ryan Zinke, whose secretarial orders
24 precipitated all of this.

25 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

1 **ANNA MUELLER, COMMENTER:** (Indiscernible) trying to frame
2 this as a state rights versus federal issue, as if this was
3 about the federal regulations imposed on local populations
4 against their will. This is not at all the case here.

5 The local Alaskans appreciate the Kenai Refuge, its
6 purpose, and federal protection, just as much as out-of-state
7 visitors. Its main purpose has been and must remain the
8 conservation of the great magic show of natural diversity. I
9 strongly oppose all proposed changes to the current regulations
10 on trapping, bear baiting, and discharging firearms.

11 And then I would also like to put on the record that --

12 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Please wrap up your comment,
13 Anna.

14 **ANNA MUELLER, COMMENTER:** -- (indiscernible -
15 simultaneous speech) comment for tomorrow's hearing, and I
16 would like to know why tomorrow's hearing was cancelled, as I'm
17 sure everybody else who got prepared for tomorrow would like to
18 know, if we could have that please on the record. Thank you.

19 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you. All right, I'm
20 going to put you back on mute and lower your hand. All right,
21 the next commenter is Mark Zier. Mark, I'm going to unmute
22 you. Hello, Mark.

23 **MARK ZIER, COMMENTER:** Hi.

24 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Hello. Could you please
25 spell your first and last name for the record?

1 **MARK ZIER, COMMENTER:** My first name is Mark, M-a-r-k.
2 My last name is Zier, Z-i-e-r.

3 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, I am going
4 to start your two-minute timer now.

5 **MARK ZIER, COMMENTER:** Thank you for taking my comment.
6 I just want to say that I agree with so much of what so many
7 people have said. As Anna just got through saying, almost
8 nobody that has spoken at this hearing has spoken in favor of
9 any of the regulations; in fact, they see them totally opposite
10 of anything that the refuge stands for.

11 I want to thank Adrienne Naumann. I want to thank
12 Richard Johnston, Robert Binnie, and Jordan Vaughn, Teresa
13 Becher, Paula Shafransky, all who spoke out against these
14 rules, and they all had great reasons.

15 Now, I should tell you that I do not come from Alaska. I
16 don't even come from Maryland or Ohio or Montana; I come from
17 California. And I am -- I have always thought of our wild
18 places as the gem of what America is about, especially the
19 western part of America.

20 And if we do anything that compromises the wildness of
21 our wild places, and especially in this time, where
22 biodiversity is being obliterated across the world, that's just
23 nonsense. Where are our standards? I mean, where did Zinke
24 come up with this? Did he get it on a napkin from the guy
25 from, you know, Safari International, when they were having

1 lunch one day? I think that's where it came from, but, I mean,
2 who knows what -- you know, I don't know anything.

3 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

4 **MARK ZIER, COMMENTER:** All I know is that this is
5 something that must be stopped. Everyone has spoken against it
6 except those who are being paid by the opposition, and it's --
7 and Zinke is long gone, as he should be. And it's time to do
8 the right thing, and the right thing is to delete all these
9 regulations and, in fact, strengthen the protections of the
10 refuge going forward. Thank you.

11 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Mark, for your
12 comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your
13 hand.

14 **AMANDA BIEDERMANN, FACILITATOR:** Hi, Amy, this is Amanda.
15 I just want to clarify quickly, for those who have their hands
16 raised, that we are going to try to go back through
17 (indiscernible) one more time. And I also just want to clarify
18 that we are working to just focus on new commenters. I do
19 apologize if there have been repeats, especially from
20 yesterday. So, at this point, we are just focusing on new
21 commenters moving forward. So we're going to circle back to
22 Rupert now, and then continue to move on with our raised hands
23 who were on the meeting today. Thank you.

24 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** All right, Rupert, can you
25 hear me? It doesn't -- I don't know. It looks like you're

1 unmuted on my end, but we still can't hear you. Hello? All
2 right, yeah, I apologize, Rupert. It seems like something is
3 going wrong with your computer audio. We do have a phone
4 number up on the screen with the meeting ID, and you could
5 always dial that number and call back in, and then raise your
6 hand, and we can get your comment that way.

7 So, for now ,we're going to move on to our next
8 commenter, who is Becky Hutchinson. Becky, I'm going to unmute
9 you. Hello.

10 **BECKY HUTCHINSON, COMMENTER:** Hello. Thank you for
11 having me this evening. I was also scheduled for tomorrow and
12 was quite startled at the announcement, so thank you for
13 allowing me to speak tonight.

14 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** All right, could you --

15 **BECKY HUTCHINSON, COMMENTER:** My name is --

16 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** -- spell your first and last
17 name for the record for us?

18 **BECKY HUTCHINSON, COMMENTER:** Yes, Becky Hutchinson.
19 It's B-e-c-k-y H-u-t-c-h-i-n-s-o-n.

20 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** All right, and then I will
21 start your two-minute timer now.

22 **BECKY HUTCHINSON, COMMENTER:** Okay, thank you very much.
23 I'm a 58-year resident of Alaska, and have lived on the Kenai
24 Peninsula for the last 42 years. I am vehemently opposed to
25 the proposed transfer of management of this wildlife refuge

1 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife to the State of Alaska. The
2 two entities have very different goals, and, therefore, very
3 different management styles.

4 The primary changes that I am opposed to are the trapping
5 and the bear baiting. The trapping, specifically, because I
6 very well remember the years before we had those regulations.
7 I remember the negotiations. I remember the public meetings.
8 I also remember the dogs and the wildlife that were caught in
9 these abandoned traps or along trailheads and visitor centers,
10 the what not. So, adamantly, for public safety, for the safety
11 of our pets, I do not want that to go back.

12 As a wildlife photographer, I walk those trails across
13 the Kenai many, many times ev -- throughout the entire year,
14 every season. It is for that reason that I am also opposed to
15 brown bear baiting. I've heard reasons --

16 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

17 **BECKY HUTCHINSON, COMMENTER:** -- that stated that there
18 were too many brown bears, and I just don't believe that's so.
19 I want to -- you know, just because Ted Spraker said it's so,
20 doesn't make it so.

21 The brown bear hunting that -- a hunt that was held just
22 a few years ago, they took over 200 brown bears in just a very
23 short amount of time, which caused them to shut it down. That
24 doesn't show me that they need to bait to take brown bears.
25 They only want to do it for trophy hunting. So, anyway --

1 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Please wrap up your comment.

2 **BECKY HUTCHINSON, COMMENTER:** -- I see I'm out of time.

3 Yes, thank you very much. I am adamantly opposed to these
4 changes.

5 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Becky, for your
6 comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your
7 hand.

8 All right, the next person that has their hand raised is
9 Probyn Gregory. Hopefully, I didn't butcher that name. I'm
10 going to unmute you. You might be muted on your end as well.
11 Make sure that you unmute. I keep trying to get you unmuted
12 here. Make sure you double-check your -- that you aren't muted
13 on your end as well. I'm going to try one more time to see if
14 I can get you unmuted, and check the mute on your end. There's
15 a -- at the bottom of your Zoom screen, if you hover your
16 cursor, you can unmute yourself.

17 Okay, well, if you are having computer audio issues as
18 well, again, I'll point you to the phone number that's showing
19 up on the screen with the meeting ID, and you can call back in,
20 and we can try to get your comment that way, Probyn.

21 All right, I'm going to move to our next commenter with
22 their hand raised, who is Victoria Cymbal. Victoria, I'm going
23 to unmute you. Hello.

24 **VICTORIA CYMBAL, COMMENTER:** Hi, can you hear me?

25 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Yes, we can. Can you

1 spell --

2 **VICTORIA CYMBAL, COMMENTER:** Hi, (indiscernible).

3 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** -- your first and last name,
4 please?

5 **VICTORIA CYMBAL, COMMENTER:** Yes, so Victoria Cymbal,
6 V-i-c-t-o-r-i-a C-y-m-b-a-l.

7 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, I will
8 start your two-minute timer now.

9 **VICTORIA CYMBAL, COMMENTER:** Awesome, thank you. So I'm
10 actually a resident of New York State, and being so far away,
11 it is very obvious what the locals of Alaska believe is best
12 for their community. And I just need to say that that's a
13 beautiful thing, and, really, I hope that the state listens to
14 that because that's very important.

15 So I am with the Committee to Abolish Sport Hunting, and
16 we strongly oppose this expansion, and would like, in fact, to
17 see that the reversal of hunting and trapping here and
18 elsewhere are ended.

19 The larger issue that is mostly hidden from the public
20 and general taxpayer is that the (indiscernible) pay taxes on
21 every bullet and firearm used against animals in our forests
22 and fields, or used against people, and the cities pay into the
23 UFSWS and State Wildlife Management Bureaus to promote more use
24 of firearms and ammunition.

25 The only way to stop this is for the public to prevent

1 their tax dollars, which largely reside in their state general
2 fund, from supporting their (indiscernible) and exclusive
3 economy that you see in action now. Millions of dollars of
4 your taxes and mine are supplementing the management of
5 wildlife, to be recipients of bullets, while human victims of
6 humans -- of bullets are left to pay for their hospitalizations
7 on their own, and families are left to pay for funerals of
8 family members.

9 State general funds must stop supplementing the systemic
10 slaughter of our wild animals, and an economy built on wildlife
11 watching must replace firearms as the foundation of wildlife
12 management. Thank you for your time and this Zoom meeting for
13 the opportunity to speak here today.

14 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Victoria, for your
15 comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your
16 hand.

17 All right, the next person that has their hand raised is
18 Debra Lichstein. Hi, Debra. Can you hear me, Debra? You
19 might need to make sure you -- oh, it looks Debra might have
20 dropped off. We'll see if she shows back up.

21 But we'll move to -- the next caller on the list who has
22 their hand raised is Robert Rima. I'll ask you to unmute. If
23 you're calling in using the phone, please press star-6 to
24 unmute yourself. Robert, if you are using your -- there you
25 are. Hi, Robert.

1 **ROBERT RIMA, COMMENTER:** Hi, can you hear me?

2 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Yes, sir, we can.

3 **ROBERT RIMA, COMMENTER:** Okay.

4 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Can you please spell your
5 first and last name for the record?

6 **ROBERT RIMA, COMMENTER:** Robert, R-o-b-e-r-t, Rima,
7 R-i-m-a.

8 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great.

9 **ROBERT RIMA, COMMENTER:** So I'm a 35-year resident of
10 Alaska. I own -- I live in Cooper Landing, Alaska. I own
11 Drifters Lodge. We employ about 35 people and about 15 guides.
12 We're all environmentally conscious, all the kids that work
13 here. We use the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge on a daily
14 basis.

15 We take taxpayers; people in Alaska come down to us;
16 people in America come to us every year. We take about 4,500
17 people through the refuge, through the wildlife areas. And the
18 biggest thing is the bears and the wildlife. You know, it's
19 just not reasonable -- and we do this safely. And it's just
20 not reasonable for them to have no buffers. Really? That
21 doesn't make any sense to me.

22 The wildlife refuge, people do not want this. Maybe we
23 should listen to them. And remember, a handful of people will
24 benefit from this; just a handful. And there's hundreds of
25 thousands of people that utilize this area and are able to see

1 it. I think it's such a great thing.

2 The physical safety of our clients is very important. We
3 think the buffer should be bigger, not smaller. It is wrong in
4 our area to allow this.

5 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Robert, your (indiscernible -
6 simultaneous speech).

7 **ROBERT RIMA, COMMENTER:** It may be --

8 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Could you please wrap up your
9 comment?

10 **ROBERT RIMA, COMMENTER:** Yes. It may be okay to do it in
11 other areas, but not where there is such a concentration of
12 people on the refuge. Right now, you can hear the -- I'm
13 sitting right on the river.

14 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Wrap up your comment, Robert.

15 **ROBERT RIMA, COMMENTER:** The Trumpeter swans are right
16 there. Hey, thank you.

17 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, sir. We
18 appreciate your comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and
19 lower your hand.

20 All right, our next commenter is Nicole Schmitt. Nicole,
21 I'm going to unmute you. Hi, Nicole.

22 **NICOLE SCHMITT, COMMENTER:** (Indiscernible)

23 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Could you spell out your
24 first and last name for us?

25 **NICOLE SCHMITT, COMMENTER:** Yep, Nicole, N-i-c-o-l-e, and

1 last name Schmitt, S-c-h-m-i-t-t.

2 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, I will
3 start your two-minute timer now.

4 **NICOLE SCHMITT, COMMENTER:** Great, thank you. My name is
5 Nicole Schmitt. I'm the executive director of Alaska Wildlife
6 Alliance. And I was not -- I didn't know that organizations
7 could testify twice, but we've heard from Safari Club two times
8 today in the normal roster, and then also with the repeat
9 callers. I appreciate the opportunity for all the other
10 organizations on the line to also speak with the same equal
11 opportunity.

12 I -- Alaska Wildlife Alliance submitted pretty robust
13 public comments. We will be doing more of that in this second
14 round of comments. But one thing that -- I suppose two things
15 I really want to touch on. The first is to echo the sentiment
16 of the overwhelming majority of folks who have called in.

17 I think it's really important to note that the public has
18 called in in waves, dozens and dozens of folks whose lives
19 would be affected by these rules. And I really urge the agency
20 to consider those comments and those perspectives from the
21 people who would be impacted the most. There's not been a lot
22 of public support from -- public support for these rule
23 changes, and I think that's notable.

24 The second issue that I wanted to touch on, that I
25 haven't heard a lot of comments on, is that the revocation of

1 the federal trapping permit would also reduce the trapping
2 buffer or take away the trapping buffer for traps set along
3 roads. And the state just spent millions of dollars, over
4 \$10 million to put wildlife underpasses on the Sterling Highway
5 along the refuge. So if you allow --

6 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

7 **NICOLE SCHMITT, COMMENTER:** -- trapping next to roads, as
8 would be allowed under this rule, the very underpasses that the
9 Department of Transportation spent millions of dollars to
10 produce would not only turn into -- I mean, they would turn
11 into population sinks. So it's issues like this that really
12 need to be assessed. We can't just have an EA and call it
13 good, so I urge you to consider the broader scope of these
14 impacts. Thank you.

15 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you, Nicole, for your
16 comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your
17 hand.

18 Okay, so we have a few phone callers with their hands
19 raised. This next one we're going to go to has the last four
20 digits in their phone number of 8393. I'm going to unmute you,
21 and then that phone caller can press star-6 to unmute
22 themselves on their end.

23 **ED SCHMITT, COMMENTER:** Hello, can you hear me?

24 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Yes, we can. Can you spell
25 your first and last name for the record?

1 **ED SCHMITT, COMMENTER:** Yes. My first name is Ed, E-d;
2 last name Schmitt, S-c-h-m-i-t-t.

3 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. All right, well, then
4 I will start your two-minute timer now.

5 **ED SCHMITT, COMMENTER:** Thank you. I'm actually calling
6 you from Bim's (ph) Landing. I was on the river today, because
7 I was scheduled to testify tomorrow. Fortunately, I had cell
8 service so I was able to be told that my testimony wouldn't be
9 taken tomorrow, that I'd have to do it today.

10 I am adamantly opposed to these changes in regulations.
11 I use the refuge with my dog all the time, and none of these
12 reg changes would be beneficial to anyone that actually uses
13 the refuge. I had previously been a lifelong NRA member; I'm a
14 lifelong hunter; I've been a Safari Club member. And it's just
15 appalling to me, the underhanded dirty tactics these
16 organizations are using to try to cram through regulations that
17 make no sense.

18 We worked a long time to get regulations that work for
19 this urban refuge for the citizens of Soldotna, of which I'm
20 one, to make some sense. And to just abolish them, to allow
21 people to trap without any accountability, to shoot bears along
22 the river I was just on today, makes absolutely no sense.

23 And in cancelling my testimony for tomorrow, so that I
24 have to do this sitting here shivering at Bim's (ph) Landing
25 makes no sense either. Thank you.

1 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you very much for your
2 comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your
3 hand.

4 All right, the next phone caller we have, your phone
5 number ends in 9444. I'm going to unmute you, and then you
6 will press star-6 on your end to unmute yourself. Hello.
7 Hello, can you hear us? I'm going to try one more time.
8 Hello, can you hear us? It looks like you are unmuted, but we
9 can't hear you.

10 All right, let's see. Well, I will -- I'm going to try
11 to go back to Probyn Gregory to see if their computer audio is
12 working again. Probyn Gregory.

13 **PROBYN GREGORY, COMMENTER:** Hello.

14 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Hello.

15 **PROBYN GREGORY, COMMENTER:** Hi. I didn't see my name in
16 the list, so I wasn't expecting to get the call.

17 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Oh, I see. Is this Probyn
18 Gregory?

19 **PROBYN GREGORY, COMMENTER:** Yes, it is.

20 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** All right, could you spell
21 your first and last name for the record, please?

22 **PROBYN GREGORY, COMMENTER:** Yes, my first name is Probyn,
23 P-r-o-b-y-n, and my last name is Gregory, G-r-e-g-o-r-y.

24 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Great. Sorry for the
25 mispronunciation.

1 **PROBYN GREGORY, COMMENTER:** That's okay.

2 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** I will start your two-minute
3 timer now.

4 **PROBYN GREGORY, COMMENTER:** Thank you. Yes, my name is
5 Probyn Gregory. I'm from the Lower 48. I have never been to
6 the Kenai Wildlife Refuge. However, this is the sort of thing
7 where, as many commentators have said before me, it's right in
8 the name. It's the Kenai Wildlife Refuge. This means that
9 there should not be any bear baiting of any kind. There should
10 not be any trapping, really, of any kind. And, actually, there
11 should probably be restricted recreation opportunities in
12 defense of the animals for whom -- who this refuge is made.

13 That's really about it. I think we can go on to the next
14 caller. I vote against these proposed rules. Thank you.

15 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you very much for your
16 comment. I am going to put you back on mute and then lower
17 your hand.

18 All right, the next person with their hand raised is
19 Debra Lichstein. Debra, hello.

20 **DEBRA LICHSTEIN, COMMENTER:** Hi. Thank you so much for
21 your patience and trying me a second time. I appreciate that.

22 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Oh, no worries. Please spell
23 your first and last name for us.

24 **DEBRA LICHSTEIN, COMMENTER:** My first name is Debra,
25 D-e-b-r-a. The last name is Lichstein -- and you did a great

1 job pronouncing it -- L-i-c-h-s-t-e-i-n.

2 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** All right.

3 **DEBRA LICHSTEIN, COMMENTER:** And thank you very much for
4 allowing me this opportunity to speak. I also am vehemently
5 opposed and appalled by the proposed new rule, which would
6 allow cruel and unethical practice of allowing hunters to shoot
7 and kill brown bears over piles of bait, opening more of the
8 refuge to trapping with fewer restrictions, which would
9 indiscriminately kill more wildlife, reduce the abundance and
10 diversity of wildlife, and cause untold suffering for animals
11 that die slowly for days in a trap, and more access for
12 snowmobiles, bicycles, and ATVs in nonwilderness portions of
13 the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, which would further stress
14 wildlife.

15 Instead, the Fish and Wildlife Service needs to protect
16 wildlife on the Kenai by prohibiting bear baiting of any kind,
17 banning trapping altogether, and limiting recreation so as to
18 lessen human impact on the land and its inhabitants.

19 As Professor Neelance (ph), who was alive 1921 to 2008,
20 stated, the time has come and gone when it is acceptable to
21 regard this world as a resource to be exploited for the comfort
22 of a single species. I thank you so much.

23 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Thank you for your comment,
24 Debra. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower your hand.

25 I'm going to go back to the public caller, the last four

1 digits of 9444. I'm going to try to unmute you again. And on
2 your end, you hit star-6 on your keypad to unmute yourself.

3 **RUPERT SCRIBNER, COMMENTER:** Hello, can you hear me?

4 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Yes, we can hear you. Can
5 you please spell your first --

6 **RUPERT SCRIBNER, COMMENTER:** Oh, my -- I can. This is
7 Rupert Scribner, R-u-p-e-r-t S-c-r-i-b-n-e-r.

8 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** Excellent. We're glad you
9 finally made it through.

10 **RUPERT SCRIBNER, COMMENTER:** Yeah, we had some technical
11 difficulties. Amy, thank you. You guys are doing a wonderful.
12 job. I appreciate the chance to comment.

13 My wife and I, we live within an eighth of a mile of the
14 boundary. We use it on a daily basis. We ski, snowshoe, hike.
15 And when I say, the boundary, the boundary for the Kenai
16 Wildlife Refuge.

17 We winter camp; we pack in our horses; we bird hunt with
18 our dogs; we hike with our dogs; we actually snowmachine. And
19 I am a trapper, and we are avid hunters on the refuge, but we
20 are not trophy hunters. This refuge is -- and by and large,
21 the hunters that use this refuge are people that are using it
22 in a subsistence manner and trying to put a little food on
23 their table.

24 I fully support the change to the Kenai rules. These are
25 common sense changes that will put the refuge in more line with

1 the state of Alaska, as well as State of Alaska Fish and Game
2 should be allowed to do their jobs. They've proven to be good
3 stewards of the land. We fully support this. It will make a
4 tremendous difference in our access to the refuge.

5 And, in fairness, and this is all -- has been greatly
6 studied by the state, and this would support these animals.
7 You know, they need to be responsibly regulated and harvested.
8 That will help keep the animals in balance and --

9 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** 30 seconds.

10 **RUPERT SCRIBNER, COMMENTER:** -- I really appreciate the
11 time to make the comment.

12 **AMY LEWIS, CO-FACILITATOR:** All right, thank you, Rupert,
13 for your comment. I'm going to put you back on mute and lower
14 your hand.

15 All right, it doesn't seem like we have anyone else with
16 their hand raised at this time.

17 **AMANDA BIEDERMANN, FACILITATOR:** Hi, everyone. Again,
18 this is Amanda. As Amy said, we currently don't see anyone
19 with their hands raised, but if you have not offered a comment
20 yet, and you are on the call this evening and you would like
21 to, please go ahead and use that raise-hand feature, and we'll
22 give folks a few minutes here to access that raise-hand
23 feature. Thank you.

24 (Pause)

25 **AMANDA BIEDERMANN, FACILITATOR:** Again, at this time,

1 we're only taking comments from people who have not already
2 commented this evening. So if you have not already commented
3 this evening, please go ahead and use that raise-hand feature.
4 Again, I'll give folks a few minutes here. And if we don't
5 have anyone else who's raised their hand, we will move into our
6 closing remarks slide. Thank you.

7 (Pause)

8 **AMANDA BIEDERMANN, FACILITATOR:** All right, it looks like
9 we don't have any more raised hands from our participants
10 remaining on the line today, so we're going to move into our
11 closing remarks slide. I'm going to officially close the
12 public comment portion of this meeting now. It's about 7:17
13 p.m. Alaska time.

14 I'm going to move into our closing remarks slide. And
15 this is just a thank you for all of you for attending and
16 participating today. We really appreciate receiving all of
17 your comments today. And I just wanted to put up some last
18 information, again, on how to submit written comments. The
19 Fish and Wildlife Service will be accepting comments until --
20 or received or postmarked on or before November 9th, and you
21 can see the mailing address that we have up on the screen here.

22 Also, you can post comments at the [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) link
23 that we have here on the screen, under the docket number
24 listed. And so, again, we highly encourage you to submit the
25 remainder of your comments in writing. And I'll leave this

1 slide up for a few minutes before closing the meeting so that
2 everybody has time to write this information down. This
3 information is also on the website. Thank you, everyone.

4 (Pause)

5 **AMANDA BIEDERMANN, FACILITATOR:** Hi, everyone. I just
6 wanted to let you know, hopefully, everyone has had time to
7 write this information down, so I'm officially going to close
8 the public meeting for today.

9 Again, we thank you all very much for your participation
10 this evening and we hope you have a great evening. Thank you.

11 (Off record)

12 (End of Proceedings)

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November 2, 2020

Marci Lynch