

U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy
Public Hearings - Anchorage, Alaska
August 23, 2002

Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

I am Iñupiat from the village of Unalakleet and have an LLM in international law from the University of Washington School of Law. While at UW, I took courses from the School of Fish and School of Marine Affairs to understand the changes happening in our environment. Our villages depend on fish, wildlife and gathering for a majority of the food put on the table and to continue a relationship with the land and sea begun thousands of years ago. My undergraduate degree is in economics and my former father in law and oldest son's grand dad is William C. Steere, Jr., the former Chairman of Pfizer, Inc., so I understand the market system. I understand power both economic and political. What our world lacks in economic and political power, it makes up for in its humanity and the beauty that views all life as sacred and necessary.

The fishing industry claims that Alaska's ocean and seas are healthy and claims are made that Alaska's the best-managed fishery in the world. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Hatchery salmon from Japan, Russia and Alaska are depleting the carrying capacity of the sea. Hatchery salmon are more aggressive feeders when released as juveniles into the ocean. They are larger than wild stock and are better able to compete for food.

To protect the wild salmon stocks and keep our communities economically viable and off welfare, hatcheries that release salmon into the Bering Sea gyro must be shut down.

Please remember your policy decisions will tremendously impact our world. Although we now are Americans, our ideas of what it means to be a "real human being" continue to value the survival of the animals we have always known. Alaska and the oceans are perceived as wilderness. In our minds, there is no wilderness. The land and ocean are living beings with life cycles that can no longer withstand the combined technological developments of the factory trawl fleet and hatch fish. The policies you come up with have the power to destroy or restore our world. Please remember that as you listen to the testimony provided.

Quyana.