

My name is Ben Stevens. I am from Stevens Village and currently a Tribal Management student at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. I would like to thank you Mr. Chair and Members of the Board for all that you do to conserve the natural resources for the state of Alaska.

I am here today to give personal testimony in opposition of Proposal 55. Indigenous people have been living a subsistence lifestyle since time immemorial. Traditional religious activities have a connection to the preservation of our culture and sense of identity. Passing this proposal will have a negative effect on the preservation of indigenous culture as well as teaching the youth their traditional ways of living passed down from their forefathers.

Alaska native people should be involved in making changes to how we practice our traditional religious activities at the death of our relatives or associated with the memorial for a deceased member of our tribe, but to my knowledge this is did not occur.

I would also like to say that I oppose Proposal 14. It has been apart of Athabascan tradition for many years. This hunting practice is apart of who we are and how we provide for our people. The animals involved are held with great respect and are powerful to our Athabascan culture.

Again I would like you Mr. Chair and Members of the Board to strongly oppose Proposal 55 and 14. Thank You.