

Thank you, Chairman and members of the board. My name is Michelle Quillin of Hughes, Alaska and I'm a tribal resources specialist with *Tanana Chiefs Conference* Tribal Resource Stewardship Program. I'm a graduate student of the Master of Science degree program in natural resource and environment at UAF with a Bachelor of Science degree in wildlife biology and conservation.

Chief Vernon John of the Nikolai Edzeno' Tribal Council, directed staff of TCC to provide testimony in support of proposal 204 to close all non-resident and resident hunting of Dall sheep in GMU 19C. The Nikolai Edzeno' Tribal Council, is a federally recognized tribal government that has successfully stewarded Dall sheep within the Nikolai traditional territory for millennia.

Chief John appreciates the efforts of member Hoffman and other members of the Alaska Board of Game who developed Proposal 204 to address local area concerns regarding the health and conservation of the local Dall sheep population in 19C. The tribal council understands that severe weather and other pressures have negatively impacted our sheep.

Our indigenous stewardship principles reflect the close relationship that our ancestors and leaders maintain with our animal relatives. As Indigenous people, we have always carefully managed Dall sheep by taking only what we need and leaving sheep alone when their numbers are low or the sheep are facing difficult challenges. We stop hunting them in order to give them a break so that their populations can rebuild and become strong once again.

Most of those who hunt sheep in our area are Non-residents and non-local Alaska residents. While some of our tribal citizens have benefitted from participating in the commercial guiding and outfitter opportunities, the challenges that Dall sheep have been facing in our region and throughout Alaska demand that we human beings take steps to help them restore. We do not believe that continued hunting under the full-curl ram harvest management strategy is appropriate given the amount of varying stresses our sheep populations are facing. For this reason, the Nikolai Edzeno' Tribal Council supports adoption of Proposal 204 as written to **close** all hunting for a period **not less** than 5 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and thank you for your service on this Board. I'll be happy to respond to questions or share with Chief John and other members of the Nikolai Edzeno' Tribal Council.