

**NWX-DOC CONFERENCING**

**Moderator: Darius Thibodeaux**

**February 23, 2022**

**1:30 pm CT**

Coordinator: Thank you for standing by. Your lines have been placed on a listen only mode until the comment session. At that time, if you do have a comment, you may press star 1. Today's conference is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. I'll now turn the call over to Linda Belkin. You may begin.

Linda Belton: Good afternoon. My name is Linda Belton and I'm National Tribal Liaison for NOAA in the Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs. And thank you for joining us today. I'd like to give you information on how the meeting is being recorded and how you may send those comments today. If you are joining by phone, all participants need to join by phone if you want to submit an audio comment. That toll-free number is (888) 455-9725. The participant code is 9-0-9-6-2-4-8.

Participants are in a listen only mode during the presentation. And verbal comments will be accepted after the presentation. And again, as I like to state,

this meeting is being recorded. To provide a comment after the presentation on the phone, the Verizon operator will provide directions to press star 1, so it is clear you have a comment. The Verizon operator will call on you by name when it is your turn and your microphone will be unmuted so you can speak.

Verbal comments will be attributed to the speaker on the recording, so please introduce yourself with your name and your tribal affiliation. Written comments - written comments should be submitted via email to Infrastructure.Tribal@NOAA.gov. And now I'd like to turn you over to our moderator, our Senior Advisor for Tribal Affairs, Dr. Zach Penney. Thank you.

Dr. Zach Penney: (*native language*). Good afternoon for everybody who is on the Pacific, Mountain, Central and Eastern time zones. And happy late morning to anybody that's in Alaska. I'm Zach Penney and I'm Senior Advisor to Dr. Spinrad, Undersecretary of NOAA. I've been with NOAA for a couple of weeks and I'm going to be moderating this today.

But to get us started off in a good way we want to go ahead and start with a song that's going to be offered to us from Lance Fisher and Giovanna Gross. Lance Fisher is from the Northern Cheyenne Nation in Montana, and Giovanna is from the Oglala Lakota Nation, but she's also of Northern Peruvian descent. So we appreciate them opening this up for us today. Giovanna and Lance sing to keep their languages alive, to inspire youth and to celebrate life. So thank you, Lance and Giovanna for being with us today. And the floor is yours.

Giovanna Gross: Hello. Good afternoon. I just wanted to introduce myself formally, in my language, out of respect for everybody on the call. And so (*native language*). What I just said was hello, my relatives, I shake your hand with a good heart. I just introduced my name and my parents' names so everybody knows who I am and where my family comes from, the Medicine Root District Pine Ridge Reservation, and also the providence of Lambayeque, Peru.

And we are just going to sing a children's song. We just wanted to sing this prayer song just so that this session could start off in a good way. And here is (Lance Fisher) who is also going to introduce himself in his language.

Lance Fisher: (*native language*). Good day. My name is Lance Fisher. I am from the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. My Cheyenne name translates to Medicine Bearer. And like Giovanna said, we are going to offer a prayer song in Lakota, dedicated to the children.

((Song))

Lance Fisher: (*native language*). Thank you.

Dr. Zach Penney: (*native language*) (Lance) and (Giovanna). So to get started today, I just wanted to offer some opening comments as we jump into the presentation from folks who are going to help us kind of move along in terms of the funding that's been offered through the infrastructure bill. But I was looking at the attendee list and there are a lot of familiar names on there, so it's good to see those names.

But for those that don't know me, I'm Dr. Zach Penney and I'm actually a relatively new senior advisor to NOAA. And as I said earlier, my portfolio focuses on fisheries and tribal engagement. I'm Nimiipuu a Nez Perce tribal member. I grew up in Idaho and just started that appointment this month.

Before joining NOAA I worked for the Columbia Tribal Fish Commission for seven years. As a matter of fact, you know, up to this point I've pretty much only worked for tribes or tribal commissions for most of my career.

And it was really only a couple of weeks ago that I was still sitting on the tribal side of the table, so it's been a bit of a switch. So my role today is to moderate this listening session on three provisions within the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Some people also refer to it as the IIJA Bill. Specifically, today's conversation should be focused on funding available or carved out for tribes. And that will be related to three buckets - Fish Passage, Pacific Salmon Coastal Recovery Fund, and Regional Ocean Partnerships.

We're very early in the process. So it was important for NOAA to get tribal input to inform how NOAA gets these funds to tribes. So as we get going along, a couple of things to understand - number one is this is a session for NOAA to listen to the tribes. Today Dr. Spinrad and the teams will be in listening mode to hear your comments and suggestions about those three provisions within that bill.

Written comments are also welcome, and Linda provided that email for you, at the start of this. And we'll also provide it at the end so you can see that. And we will provide contacts for written comments, later in the agenda. Number two, please treat today as the first opportunity to provide comments to NOAA,

not the last. The dialog and availability of these three buckets of funding, will span over the next five years, so about 2022 to 2027.

And then number three, just please be respectful about speaking time. There are multiple tribes on today's call and we want to make sure everyone has a chance to speak. And again, we're extremely early in this process so there will be time for later follow ups with NOAA if that's desired.

So we've already gone through the welcome and the prayer and my opening remarks. The presentation today will cover those three provisions which is Fish Passage, Pacific Salmon Coastal Recovery Fund, and Regional Ocean Partnerships and tribal input.

But before we get to those presentations, I do want to hand this over to Dr. Spinrad who is the Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and the NOAA Administrator. Dr. Spinrad is responsible for the strategic direction and oversight of the agency and over 12,000 employees, including developing NOAA's portfolio of products and services to address the climate crisis, enhancing environmental sustainability, and fostering economic development in creating a more just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive NOAA workforce. So with that, Dr. Spinrad the floor is yours.

Dr. Richard Spinrad: Thank you, Zach. Let me start by welcoming you. It's great to have you onboard. And I'll introduce myself briefly. So I am the 11th NOAA Administrator. I moved back to DC from my home in Central Oregon after I was confirmed in June. This is actually my fourth job at NOAA. I also headed up NOAA Research and was the Head of the National Ocean Service for quite a few years. So I like to think I know NOAA pretty well.

And I want to start also by thanking you all for taking time to join us today. We do understand that consulting with the federally recognized tribes is a critical aspect of that sound and productive relationship between the US and sovereign Indian tribal governments. Tribal nations are the original stewards of our lands and waters and have been the most effective managers and protectors of biodiversity. And it's an honor and a privilege to hear from you.

You heard Zach indicate, back in November President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also known by its acronym IIA, which provides more than \$13 billion for direct investments in tribal communities across the country. This IIA funding provides a really unique opportunity to advance NOAA's critical mission from weather and climate services to managing fisheries and marine protected areas, and coastal management in general.

NOAA's goal is to ensure these funds balance stewardship and economic opportunity while implementing the work that needs to be done. IIA funding is the vital component in advancing the work that our nation and the world need to do to become climate ready. And in fact, NOAA's Climate Ready Nation initiative is in a formative stage right now, with engagement underway across NOAA and with our partners.

And this initiative, the Climate Ready Nation initiative, is going to target our current investments like IIA, as well as future ones, to address things like climate risks in key impact areas, including floods, fire, droughts, extreme heat, and also to build resilience. Today, we are taking a step in engaging

interested tribes in a sustained dialog about this funding. And I can't overstate that. This is intended to be a sustained dialog.

Right now we are seeking your input to inform some of the early planning decisions around three specific provisions of the Infrastructure Act related to NOAA programs. Those would be Fish Passage, Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund, and the Regional Ocean Partnerships. We look forward to additional opportunities to consult, partner, and engage with you in the weeks, months, and years to come, on these opportunities, as well as other relevant NOAA actions.

Please keep in mind today we will largely be listening to your input rather than responding to it. We intend to release a summary of the comments we receive, while also incorporating them into the execution of the infrastructure provisions. So now, I do look forward to hearing from the tribal representatives that have joined us today. I'm going to throw it back to Dr. Penney to introduce our other panelists, and move on to our comment period. Thank you.

Dr. Zach Penney: Thank you, Dr. Spinrad. So next portion, we're going to go ahead and have Carrie Selberg Robinson, who's the Director of NOAA Fisheries Office and Habitat Conservation, provide an overview of the Fish Passage provision. But she will be followed by Barry Thom, who will provide an overview of Pacific Salmon Coastal Recovery Fund. And then Keelin Kuipers who will provide it on Regional Ocean Partnerships. So I am now handing this off to Carrie. So go for it. The floor is yours.

Carrie Selberg Robinson: Thank you, Zach. Hello, everybody. It's a pleasure to be with you today. As Zach said, my name is Carrie Selberg Robinson. I'm the Director of the Office of Habitat Conservation. And I want to talk to you a little bit about the Fish Passage Provision of the Infrastructure Bill.

So in this provision, it provides funding to support fish passage through the removal of dams and other in-stream barriers, to help protect and restore habitats, to sustain fisheries, recover protected species, and maintain resilient ecosystems and communities.

Up to 15% of the funding will be reserved for tribes and provided through a competitive grant process under our Community-based Restoration Program. Tribes are also, of course, eligible to compete in the grant processes for the broader fish passage funding as well. There are a couple of questions that we are seeking your input on today. First, how can NOAA align this fish passage funding with tribal priorities and needs?

And second, NOAA will use a grant mechanism that results in cooperative agreements to allocate these funds, and we are seeking your input on your recommendations for how NOAA can award these funds to engage with and support tribes, including funding going directly to tribes and funding going to other tribal serving or partner organizations. With that, I will pass it off to Barry.

Barry Thom: And good morning, good afternoon, everybody. It's good to see like Zach said, a lot of familiar faces or names on the screen today, as well as some new tribal folks engagement.

I think that's one of the benefit of this program, is the increased tribal engagement that can occur through this funding. I'm going to talk to you about the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund. It's a program that's been around for a while. I'm going to cover the who and the what it's for, and then also outline a few questions.

So the who, so the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund is open to the West Coast states and tribes, so any of the tribal entities in the states around the states of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Alaska. And it's also open to tribal commissions or consortia as well, as part of that. It's designed to fund activities that protect, conserve, and restore salmon and Steelhead populations in their habitat. And there are three specific activities that are included within the PCSRF program.

The first is those actions that are designed to recover Pacific Salmon and Steelhead listed under the Endangered Species Act or identified by a state that's at risk to be so listed. The second component is really in support of actions that support Pacific Salmon and Steelhead activities that are also important to tribal treaty and trust fishing opportunities and native subsistence fishing. And the third component is really just the basic piece of conserving Pacific Salmon and Steelhead - habitat.

So there are four questions related to the new infrastructure funding that's available that we're interested in receiving input today. The first is, are there modifications to the existing program, that are needed to increase the accessibility of these funds for tribes or the tribal consortium, or commissions? The second is, should these funds have a different priority than the preexisting Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund program?

For example, prioritizing these funds for projects of different scale than the historic program, or different ways to address limiting factors for Pacific salmon. The third question is, how can the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund grant program further support the tribes and the tribal commissions or consortia, on Pacific Salmon and Steelhead in recovery efforts?

And then lastly, are there other ways to determine the allocation of funds amongst the tribes and the tribal commissions, to achieve the desired outcomes for Pacific salmon? Are there ways to run the program that are there actually better for the tribes moving forward? So with that, Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery, I will turn it over to Keelin, who will cover the other piece.

Keelin Kuipers: Great. Thank you, Barry. Good morning and good afternoon, everyone. Thanks so much for joining us today. I'm Keelin Kuipers. I'm the Deputy Director of the Office for Coastal Management in the National Ocean Service. And I'm going to speak with you about the Regional Ocean Partnerships Funding that's included in the Infrastructure Bill, a bit of a background on it, and then the questions that we are asking you to provide comment on.

So first, a little bit about regional ocean partnerships. Within the Infrastructure Bill, there's \$56 million, which will enhance these partnerships. These are voluntary, multi-state, typically governor-established forums, that identify shared priorities and take action on a diversity of ocean and coastal issues important within their geographies. These are longstanding partnerships that provide coordination and collaboration across states, tribes and federal agencies on regional, coastal and ocean issues.

And NOAA has provided a variety of support for them over the years. With this funding, we do intend to support two distinct activities each year. So first, for established regional ocean partnerships to coordinate the interstate and intertribal managements of ocean and coastal resources, and then second, to enhance associated sharing and integration of federal and non-federal data in the regions.

So we do have four questions that we are asking you to think about and provide comments on if you desire. The first is, has your tribe identified coastal and ocean management issues and priorities? Have you discussed those issues and priorities with other tribes in the region? The second question is, does your tribe work in coordination with the four established regional ocean partnerships and/or the five integrated ocean observing system regional associations? If so, what works well and what aspects need improvement?

The third question is, what types of activities related to ocean resource management priorities or to enhancing sharing of ocean data and knowledge, do you anticipate these funds will help support? And then the last question is, what are your recommendations for how NOAA awards these funds to engage with and support tribes, including funding going directly to tribes or other tribal serving or partner organizations? Again, thank you for joining us today. And with that, I'm going to turn it back over to Zach.

Dr. Zach Penney: Thank you, Keelin. Thank you, Barry. And thank you, Carrie. So I'm looking at my clock here. It's 12 54 Pacific Time, so it's almost Noon in Alaska, and it's almost gosh, 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time. So we still have about an hour and a half for tribal comments. So before we begin that, I did want to put out these sort of three broad framing questions for the discussion today.

And the first one of these is, you know, what examples do you have of processes that, you know, facilitate access to federal funding or missteps from other programs that provide important lessons? We'd like to hear that from you. We want additional information or support that would be most helpful to your tribe or tribal commission, in accessing these NOAA funds. And then last but not least, is what other requests, questions, or feedback, do you have for NOAA at this stage?

So those are the framing questions we want to put out in front of you. At any time during today's comment section you want us to go back to any of the provisions that Carrie and Barry and Keelin covered, we can go ahead and do that. For those that are not familiar with WebEx, today is, you know, I'm going to be here to be the moderator to help folks out, but remember you have to push star 1. We'll get you in the queue to provide your comment. And I'll be sort of acting like a radio DJ, you know, asking - once we get through a comment, asking who the next one is.

And our technical expert, Shirley, will be the one helping us queue that up. So with all of that said, we'll have Barry and Keelin and Carrie here, to answer specific questions if there are any, about these various funding provisions. And if there's something broader, you know, we'll do the best among all of us, to address it. And again, this is the first of hopefully, you know, many different times we'll have a chance to discuss this. So with that, I think it's time to open this up for tribal comments. So Shirley, do we have any folks in the queue?

Coordinator: At this time I'm showing no one in the queue. And again, if you do have a comment, just press star 1. Again, star 1. And one moment, please.

Dr. Zach Penney: So the call lines are open. So for any comments, yes, do please press star 1 and yes, we're here.

Coordinator: And at this time I'm showing no comments.

Dr. Zach Penney: Okay. Well I'm going to stare awkwardly at the screen until we do get a comment. So Shirley, just let me know when somebody gets in the queue.

Coordinator: I will do. Thank you.

Dr. Zach Penney: I guess I could go to the attendee list and start asking people.

Coordinator: We do have a question that came in and it's from Gerald James. Your line is open. You may ask your comment.

(GI Jane): Good morning, or good afternoon. I put stuff in the chat I guess. And I'm, you know, the frustration and Barry's heard it many times from me, and I appreciate his comments to resubmit a much nicer version of me. But I've been at this for so long that my patience level isn't very high.

So I try to be as nice as I can be to stress that this system isn't working for us. And asking us to participate into a system that doesn't function well for its intended outcome, is a bit frustrating.

There needs to be a better way of getting funding to tribes, to not compete. We're all starving here and you're asking us to compete for food instead of addressing the base needs of the tribes. And, you know, EPA has a good, well at least one that's working that doesn't provide all the money we need, but it actually allows us to participate the - it gives us base funding to hire people to actually do some of the work.

We're asking - we don't have enough staff to go around to address all of the issues, so we have to rob from our existing staff that are doing more than full time work, to apply for competitive grants to address crisis issues.

And as much as that meets the needs of the bureaucracy of how to divvy up money, it isn't functioning for getting to fish recovery. And that's the bottom line here, is that we need fish for our people. And this isn't an exercise in doing the best we can with what we've got. This is about figuring out what actually needs to be done, not what we can or are willing to do.

So there has never been a complete plan laid out for what actually needs to be done. Whether they sit - whether these projects and proposals and, you know, and I'm trying to - there's not - is there a whole lot of people in the queue? I don't want to take all the time, but the - there has to be a better process to actually get to success, not to get to meeting the needs of the funding mechanism, but actually accomplishing the outcome.

And this one doesn't function. It may work for the bureaucracy, but it isn't working as Barry has admitted, what we're doing isn't working. So something has to change fundamentally here if we're going to get to addressing these problems and not just spending the money. So, thank you.

((Crosstalk))

Coordinator: Are you ready for the next comment?

Dr. Zach Penney: Yes.

Coordinator: Thank you. And that comes from Kelly Coates. Your line is open.

Kelly Coates: Hi. This is Kelly. Can you hear me okay?

Dr. Zach Penney: Loud and clear.

Kelly Coates: Great. Thank you. Hi. I'm Kelly Coates. I'm a water and environmental resources program manager for the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians. And I just have a question regarding the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund. How will these funds impact this year's PCSRF grant offering? Because proposals are due March 21st for this. So a lot of us are already working on our proposals now.

Dr. Zach Penney: Go ahead, Barry.

Barry Thom: Yes, Zach, I can take that one and I could hear you, Kelly. So for this year's - the input we're taking today will largely be used to help influence the future of the program moving forward. We do know that the existing base PCSRF funding process is moving forward right now through March. So most of the input today, in terms of prioritization of processes and other things we'll be using as we move that forward in the future, at this point.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next...

Kelly Coates: Thank you.

Coordinator: Go ahead.

Kelly Coates: Can I just ask a follow up to that really quick? Will there be additional funding from the infrastructure package that will go toward this year's offering? Or will this infrastructure funding start next year?

Barry Thom: Yes, thanks, Kelly. And I don't know if you are aware, but the spend plans are still going through the approval process for the infrastructure funds. So some of that is still undetermined at this time.

Kelly Coates: Okay. Thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next comment comes from (Leonard Foresman). Your line is open.

Leonard Forsman: Hi. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to say a few words. I was just wondering, I guess it's a question about the funding requirements or restrictions. We have a lot of projects that are restoration-oriented and I was just wondering if we can use the money for restoration. And also, there are some projects that have been vetted by local governments and that we've kind of been focused on addressing or approaching - I guess the word would be framing it up for the EPA's nearshore estuary program or something like the NEP money.

And I'm just wondering if you feel like this money might be a fit for some of those same projects. There's more money coming into that, but we could use more funding for some of these projects for restoration, which is a longer term approach. There are a lot more short term approaches that are needed as well, you know, regarding hatchery funding, etc. So I'm just kind of thinking about the places that this funding might be appropriate or available for those needs.

Dr. Zach Penney: Hey. Yes, thanks. Carrie, do you want to take the first crack at this one?

Carrie Selberg Robinson: I do. The first part of your question, for the fish passage funding, yes, we would be looking to fund habitat restoration projects that are related to fish passage. It would be difficult for me to speak to specific projects right now. But there would be a funding opportunity with a lot more details about specific kinds of projects that we're looking for. And these listening sessions are going to help us craft that funding opportunity.

But yes, overall restoration projects that focus on fish passage, will be the kinds of projects we would be funding out of this provision.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next comment then comes from Tom Biladeau. Your line is open.

Tom Biladeau: Thank you. Can you guys hear me okay?

Dr. Zach Penney: We can.

Tom Biladeau: This is Tom Biladeau with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Anadromous Program Lead. And if you're not aware, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe Tribe are a salmon people, although they haven't seen salmon into their traditional territories, in almost a century due to construction of the Grand Coulee Dam. Traditionally, we haven't been able to access a lot of these funds to support projects for salmon reintroduction because we have no salmon.

So I guess my question is for probably both Ms. Robinson and Mr. Thom on whether or not this passage funding can be applied for possible fish passage reintroduction projects at those two federal projects, Chief Joseph Dam and Grand Coulee Dam. Or whether or not that - the PCSRF money would be better applicable for that.

Barry Thom: Yes. Maybe I'll jump in. And thanks, Thom for that question. I think that issue is like exactly the kinds of things we're looking for input on in terms of the types of projects that the tribes would like to see funded with the programs. I think fish passage is a new program so I think there's a lot to be determined in terms of eligible uses or not, in working through that.

And then I would just recognize the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund does allow for a pretty wide range of activities that are focused on Pacific Salmon conservation, whether that's for ESA listed talks or those that are important for a tribal three year trust responsibility and fishing.

So it is pretty wide open in terms of eligible activities that have potential there. But thanks for the input. And I think if you provide more input on the types of work that might help actually, as they're developing the program criteria for some of these pieces.

Tom Biladeau: Yes. I guess I can expand on it a little bit. You know, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe Tribe along with the Upper Columbia United Tribes, have put together a reintroduction project. It's actually in line with the power council's saved approach for reintroduction up into the Upper Columbia Basin. And we're moving into some pilot projects and research projects on survival through those dams and into the Upper Columbia, and what the potential for getting funding for those types of projects would be I guess, more specifically, is what I would be interested in.

And Barry, we have been working with Michael Tehan to some degree, to talk about this. And you're probably somewhat aware of it. And hopefully, just keep it on the radar and, you know, look for those proposals coming down the pipeline. I appreciate it.

Dr. Zach Penney: Thanks, Tom.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next comment comes from Paul Ward. Your line is open.

Paul Ward: Hey. Good afternoon. Thank you for this opportunity. I think the experience of the Accord partners and having a foreseeable future funding at certain levels, allows you to expedite or to more expeditiously implement habitat projects. And I think originally we were looking at, you know, larger scale projects taking 18 months from concept to implementation.

And so, you know, I don't know if it's a fact, but, you know, IJ funding would, you know, possibly give you that flexibility in sitting out set asides for tribes that they then would not necessarily have to compete for on a project by

project basis, but be able to, you know, have that kind of horizon timeline to implement larger scale projects. That's the only comment I have, just that this provides for that creativity. Thank you.

Dr. Zach Penney: Thanks, Paul.

Coordinator: Thank you. The next comment comes from (Stan Bandywethering). Your line is open.

Stan van de Wetering: Excuse me. I'm having problems with my phone. I just entered my comment in the chat so I can keep that on the record. And Barry, good to see your face. Long time no see. Thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you again. If you have a comment, press star 1. Our next comment comes from Jennifer Hagen. Your line is open.

Jennifer Hagen: Good afternoon. This is Jennifer Hagen with the Quileute Tribe. I also entered my questions in the chat. It's a little challenging here, the way you guys have set this up, where we're kind of isolated and can't see who else is on the call or what other people are putting in the chat. I just wanted to make that note. So I was wondering what is contained in the existing spend plan for year one? And also, how will today's comments from the tribes be treated and incorporated into the implementation for years two through five?

Dr. Zach Penney: I'm sorry, I missed - was that specific to any of the provisions, or is that just more of a broad comment? I'm sorry.

Jennifer Hagen: Yes. It's a little bit broad. I have more specifics that I'd like to ask later, but I don't - we are under the understanding that year one funding has already - has an associated spend plan, yet we don't have - it hasn't been shared with us what the spend plan is.

So I was wondering if you could elaborate on what specifics are in that year one spend plan. And then the second part - following today's input from the tribes, where do you see the information going as far as implementing years two through five of this funding?

Carrie Selberg Robinson: So I just got word this morning that I believe the spend plans might have just gone to Congress. I don't have confirmation myself about that. So step one was delivering those spend plans to Congress and then we're going to be waiting to hear back from them, to make sure that what the agency has outlined is something that they're comfortable with.

And I think my understanding of those next steps will be once we hear back from Congress if they're comfortable with what we've outlined, we can make those - we can share those more broadly. But I think step one was making sure that we put forward a plan that was in line with their intent. Dr. Spinrad, I saw you give a thumbs up on that. I don't know if you want to add anything.

Dr. Richard Spinrad: Yes, thanks, Carrie. I just will add that yes, the spend plans made it through the Office of Management and Budget after a lot of back and forth, and did go up on the Hill just in the last day. I want to make sure people understand, these spend plans do not indicate at a project level, where we are spending the money.

So in response Jennifer, to your question, the spend plan doesn't say X dollars will go to this project, Y dollars will go to that project. Instead they define what the objectives are with a little bit more specificity than what the law called out in those particular provisions - the, you know, the PCSRF provisions for example. And so it's our intent to have the announcements out as soon as possible, once the spend plans are ready to go. So please realize these are hardly baked in, in terms of where the resources are going.

There are specific indications in terms of how much will be going to tribes in each of these three provisions that we've been talking about here today. And I would add, you had asked about affecting the out years, the specific reason why we're doing these consultations is so that we can frame the out year plans in close coordination based on what we're hearing in these consultations.

Jennifer Hagen: Thank you. That's good to hear. Can I ask another question or do I need to get back in the queue? I joined late, so I'm not sure what the rules of the road are.

Dr. Richard Spinrad: Go for it.

Jennifer Hagen: Okay. So specific to the regional ocean partnerships, there - I'm not sure how you are thinking about prioritizing where these funds go. I think that there should be some more interaction specific to that one, regarding the West Coast Ocean Alliance. We've been working hard for many years between the tribes and the states and the feds, to keep that planning body moving forward. We've done a lot of work. And so tribes are fairly well engaged with that. There are quite a few that aren't as well.

But so I'm just curious as to when down the road, do you think that you might be able to share how you're prioritizing the funds specific to the regional ocean partnerships and the IOOS regional associations.

Dr. Zach Penney: Keelin?

Keelin Kuipers: Yes. Thank you, Zach. Yes. So I expect we'll be able to do that a little bit later this spring, once we take the feedback and comments that we're receiving through this process, and then also too, from the Hill, Congress on their review of the spend plan for this year. But thank you. That is an important issue for us to consider - quickly as we can.

Jennifer Hagan: You bet. Because I know that all regions are not created equal and there are some regions that don't even have regional planning bodies, and many that do not even have tribes engaged. And so I'm just, you know, selfishly hoping to keep our West Coast regional planning body moving with the momentum it has. And I'd also suggest that consideration be given for the different roles that data portals for regional associations, or regional planning bodies are, and what the role is of the IOOS regional associations data platforms.

They're serving two different needs. And so I want to make sure that just because we have a fairly well advanced regional ocean planning body, our interaction and our need for that IOOS's regional association receiving funds to keep going on the good work they're doing as well is very important. Thank you.

Keelin Kuipers: Excellent. Thank you. We'll be sure to follow up.

Coordinator: Thank you. Again, press star 1 if you have a comment. Our next comment comes from (Laura Pevin). Your line is open.

Laura Pevan: Hello. Can you hear me? Oh, hello? Can someone give a thumbs up if you can hear me? Sorry.

Dr. Zach Penney: Yes, no, we can hear you just fine.

Laura Pevan): Thank you very much. I appreciate it. Sorry. Let me - I'm looking for my questions. So I'm a new fisheries biologist for a small tribal government in Alaska. And I'm just kind of getting my feet under me, but there are some culverts that we'd like to replace.

So I guess this question is more specifically for Ms. Robinson. We are partners with a national fish habitat partnership for the Matanuska Borough. And I'm wondering in those two questions, the second one like, what partners can we support?

Is there any indication from you - so we participate in that partnership and since it's kind of, you know, NOAA/EPA-related, how best can we partner with them in making fish passage a priority in our area? Because there's also a 2000 - a little bit of background, there's a 2016 report from our local US Fish & Wildlife Service regional office that prioritized fish passage based off the number of miles upstream. So it seems like we can just throw this funding at that because it's prioritized on the number of miles upstream that we have.

So how best would you recommend that like I and the tribe, kind of push that process?

Carrie Selberg Robinson: That's exactly the kind of feedback we're looking for today. So I think highlighting that for us as a way to prioritize work, as a way to fund work, hearing that kind of feedback that you would like that to be a part of the funding opportunities, would be really helpful comments for us to get. So I appreciate you providing them today. I would encourage you to provide those in written feedback.

We always like to fund work that some sort of regional body or group of people have come together and prioritized already. So I think the NFHP example that you provided, is a good one for things like that.

Laura Pevan: Awesome. Sounds good. Well, I will try to put that into words and make a letter by March 22nd I want to say. But yes, it seems like the cooperate - like we cooperate with so many other groups on this sort of stuff and it seems like it would just be a relatively easy way to assign funding if the list was already there for fish passage. And I'm sure that a lot of municipalities and I think the Department of Transportation for Alaska also has like a list of fish passage culverts that are just like on a rank of, you know, terrible to okay.

And yes, anyway, I appreciate your feedback and thank you very much.

Dr. Zach Penney: Thank you. Shirley, before we move onto the next caller if there is one, I just wanted to interject real quick that I'm also having trouble finding the chats that people are putting in there. So, but I was informed that if you have entered something into the chat we do have somebody on the team that's compiling them. So they are part of the record. But if you do feel it's really

important to have it said during this meeting, go ahead and press star 1. So I just wanted to make sure we said that. So, go ahead, Shirley.

Coordinator: thank you. Our next comment comes from DR Michel. Your line is open.

Dr. Zach Penney: Are you there, DR?

DR Michel: Yes. Can you hear me?

Dr. Zach Penney: I can.

DR Michel: Cool. Cool. I appreciate the opportunity to share this more. My concerns or thoughts I guess, are kind of some comments on process and I appreciate some of the comments about, you know, you're throwing some money out there for the tribes to compete over and to prioritize projects when we need to be looking more at this saving salmon as a whole. We've got the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery bar which, you know, basically is kind of prioritizing - or it seems like a lot of the funding goes down river.

Salmon recovery bar seems like that process then stops at the base of Chief Joe. And just some general comments about if we're truly going to save the salmon we need to be able to integrate and put these projects together up and down the river, that's going to, you know, that are going to help in those recovery efforts.

It's like we've got the river divided up into sections still and we're trying to fix the lower river, you know, the middle river and the upper river, when we need to be looking at the river, the system as a whole. We've got a lot of habitat

around Chief Joe and Grand Cooley. We've got our phase 2 plan out there that talks about how we can move that forward. But again, we're being thrown in this bigger pot to compete with funding and with efforts down river that have impacts that can potentially help save the salmon.

But until we look at the system more as a whole, we're going to continue to struggle with saving the salmon, saving the orcas, the, you know, whatever else those issues may be, down river. I think a lot of the solutions are looking at those waters and those habitats above Chief Joe and Grand Cooley. So just some comments. Thank you.

Dr. Zach Penney: Thanks, DR.

Coordinator: Thank. Your our next comment comes from Gerald James. Your line is open.

Gerald James: Yes. I couldn't have said that better myself. That was really good. There is no plan. There are a bunch of projects. And the funding mechanism doesn't provide for that. And if we're going to actually be accountable for getting the recovery there has to be a recovery plan, not a bunch of projects that meet somebody's criteria set that up, obviously in year one. You guys have set that up.

So where was the consultation to help guide where year one's going? You're having it between you guys and OMB. It was the tribes that fought for this set aside and we're not even included.

So I'm concerned that we're going to go down the track where things have been set up for year one and now they have to go to year two because you've

funded something to start with, and now you've got to continue with. So I'm - because we don't have a collective plan, each tribe, each river system has projects.

Some tribes have been able to put together a comprehensive plan, most tribes have not. And collectively, we do not have - I mean we're acting like we're all in silence when at least half of us in Puget Sound are dependent on other tribes' success. For Lummi - we're not fishing in any of our UNA because all of these resources are in disaster. But we're not included in any of those other plans. We're not part of the outcome.

So there has to be a much broader plan that includes everything on what we're going to do. And I've put in the chat if the funding isn't going to be adequate to recover everything then prioritization of - on how we're going to recover something, needs to be done, because we can't continue spending money everywhere, including everybody, if we're going to have some success somewhere, and prove that we can actually get the recovery, because it's a fallacy right now.

There are several of our systems that are never going to recover natural habitat. It's already been paved over. So I'm really concerned that there's nobody doing the comprehensive plan, saying yes, go ahead in the Nooksack and apply for a grant that meets all the criteria, but isn't going to actually get us to recovery, because that isn't going to happen in any of our lives. So we need a different solution than others. And I imagine that's the same with every other system.

So I'm concerned that we don't have the brain trust working to figure out oh, gee, are we going to remove the city of Seattle? You know, that isn't going to happen. But the structure we've got anticipates that yes, you're going to. You know that we're going to recover natural producing stock in those systems, whether it be the Lake Washington Cedar or Duwamish-Green or white or Nooksack or Stillaguamish. There's got to be a much better scientific reality to whether these plans or these projects are actually going to accomplish recovery.

And there's got to be a hypothesis somewhere that's not just a project hypothesis, comprehensive. So thanks.

Dr. Zach Penney: Okay.

Coordinator: Thank you. Again, if you would like to ask or make a comment, please press star 1. Thank you. Our next comment comes from Nicole Lexon. Your line is open.

Nicole Lexon: Hi. My name is Nicole Lexon. I work for the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. We're on the John Day River on a little satellite office. I just had a general question about the fish passage funding. I was wondering what the specific criteria, and you may not know that right now, but we work a lot with small landowners on their irrigation diversions, and then we also do bigger projects. So I didn't know if that would include such small projects or if it was just for like large scale like main John Day or Columbia, or other systems.

Carrie Selberg Robinson: Zach, I'll jump in if that's okay.

Dr. Zach Penney: Yes. Go for it, Carrie.

Carrie Selberg Robinson: So we are still very much working on our criteria. So feedback from you on what you would hope to see and, you know, for funding levels and size of projects and things like that, would be helpful to us as we develop the program.

Nicole Lexon: Okay. Yes, I mean other things that I'd definitely be interested in just because we do, you know, work at a juvenile level where there's, you know, so many irrigators in our basin that are completely stuffing out passage. So that's definitely something we'd be interested in.

Carrie Selberg Robinson: I appreciate that comment. Thank you.

Nicole Lexon: Thank you.

Barry Thom: And Zach, this is Barry. And maybe just to add to that, because your comment brings up a good one. I just wanted to re-highlight. So one, in terms of the funding and the purpose of this session today is to get input on what kinds of projects you'd like to see happen, the prioritization process you would like to see happen, any other process improvements.

And the reality is the funding opportunities for these programs has not went out. And I think that's the piece that - they're wide open for year one and so there is time for input whether it's year one or years two through five, to help shape. And that's the exact purpose.

So if you have comments of things you would like to see or processes you'd like to see, please let us know today or get us to the - get us those in writing so we can help shape the programs going forward.

Dr. Zach Penney: Yes. Thanks for that, Barry. Shirley, do we have anybody else in the queue?

Coordinator: Thank you. Yes. Our next comment comes from Karen Gillis. Your line is open.

Karen Gillis: Good afternoon. My name is Karen Gillis. I am the Executive Director of Bering Sea Fisherman's Association. And speaking to you through a memorandum of understanding that we have with 108 tribes served by the Association of Village Council Presidents Kawerak, Inc. Tanana Chiefs Conference. These entities serve the Arctic, Yukon and Kuskokwim regions of Alaska, where Pacific salmon are profoundly important. And I'm going to set a small stage here because Alaska has what we believe is kind of a chronic problem with the current program.

So our involvement and let me back up one quick step, I am living and working on the unceded lands of the Dena'ina people. And I thank them for their past, present, and future stewardship of this land. So our involvement with PCSRF began in 2002 when our entities formed through a memorandum of understanding between my organization, the three organizations I mentioned, the state of Alaska, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and NOAA Fisheries.

And we are dealing with an accelerating collapse of our salmon populations, which directly threatens the food security, cultural, and spiritual well-being, and subsistence economies, of tribal people and communities in this region.

Our tribes have lived and stewarded this ecosystem for millennia. And the culture is inextricably linked to the health and abundance of salmon. We think the - one of the primary problems with the current program, which casts a shadow over new funds we believe, is that it's focused almost solely on habitat restoration for ESA stocks which is effectively a lock on the vast majority of these funds. I appreciate that Barry put up the three priorities on the screen earlier which we worked very hard to address within our application every year.

But there's no effective way - well, let me say to - priority number one specifies that - well I should say 1B specifies that PCSRF funds are awarded for the necessary exercise of tribal treaty fishing rights or native subsistence fishing.

And seeing that language under priority one indicates to us -- and we've had this argument and going back and forth with folks over the years on this issue -- that the populations in the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim regions fall under priority one except for the fact that PCSRF allows for a very narrow definition to what factors limiting the productivity of these populations are. The - in Alaska and in specifically the Arctic-Yukon -Kuskokwim regions we're not living with culvert problems and passage issues.

In PaC SuRF or PCSRF or - I'll go back and forth probably in saying PaC SuRF and PCSRF- PaC SuRF doesn't seem to recognize that limiting factors

can be defined as any factor which our definition and I think the general scientific definition is that if any factor living and non-living that limits the growth of potential of a species or an ecosystem we believe that PaC SuRF should be available to restore the stocks that are collapsing in our region as well as the ESA listed stocks, that there be equal footing and that they broaden the priority beyond habitat restoration as we see it and have been working within it for some time.

So if salmon in our regions are provided or are needed and necessary for a food security crisis that we are in and we have been in for many years are deemed of a lower priority based on what we understand, the narrow application of priority one to be, and just for the record, we received less than 1% of current PaC SuRF dollars to address impacts across a third of the state of Alaska.

I don't think we can continue under this structure and pretend that we are working to protect, assess and restore the stocks in our regions. So we're looking for prioritization of stocks that are critical food source for subsistence dependent and indigenous communities. We believe that tribes should be allowed a higher percentage for program implementation, as there's currently a 3% limit for administration and - or indirect cost recovery.

I absolutely understand the reasoning behind that. What I cannot work within is a program that doesn't support the program we're trying to implement.

And when I say program I mean a research and restoration plan that took years to establish with guidance from a committee of the National Research Council that guides what projects we fund, what priorities exist. And it's our

roadmap for how to bring these stocks back from the decline, the precipitous decline that they are in.

We believe there should be a funding floor for tribal entities, and we would then work with the Alaska delegation in an attempt to level the playing field where we believe PaC SuRF's intentions were designed for. We also believe that there needs to be an improvement within the process for evaluating applications.

The current and I'm going to put air quotes because - around competitive, because the current competitive process has a very strong peer review process, which evaluates and scores proposals. And then those scores and evaluations are then passed to a separate group that makes award decisions. Whether we consolidate these groups or create an independent advisory body to ensure that there's an objective process, we just think it needs to be revisited.

I guess that's kind of the sum of what I want to say. And I guess in summary, the people in these regions cannot live and cannot maintain their culture and cannot raise their children without salmon. Thank you.

Dr. Zach Penney: Thank you Karen. That was very clear. I appreciate those comments. Shirley, before we move on, I just want to- before we go to the next caller, do you have a tally of how many calls you have left? Are you there Shirley?

Coordinator: Thank you. Yes, I was getting the name. And the next one comes from Gus White. Your line is open.

Seth White: Hi. Is that - did you mean to say Seth White? Is that me? But I - I'm not sure if anybody can hear me here.

Dr. Zach Penney: Seth, I can hear you.

Seth White: Okay. Okay, thanks. Yes. Sorry, after that last comment, this is going to seem like a very technocratic comment, so I won't ask for any answer. I'll just make sure it gets on the record.

This is a comment about the interaction between tribes and inter-tribal organizations in obtaining funding, because I noticed that that theme was raised in each of the questions that you had for the topic areas.

So inter-tribal org are meant to serve the needs of their member tribes. So obviously setting up a funding mechanism that prevents competition is very important.

However, because inter-tribal organizations sometimes have additional capacity and are providing services to those tribes, I don't think it would serve the tribes to exclude the intracranial partners. And I don't know the best solution because I've seen several attempts to get around the problem, but with various success.

For example, I've seen Department of Interior funding theoretically available to tribes left on the table because the tribe may not have the capacity to apply for the funding and the inter-tribal works are excluded. So one solution for discussion, just as an example, is to allow the entire tribal organizations to

access funding, but only if they've demonstrated support from the tribes that they serve, they showed demonstrated support.

So I guess I'm just bringing this up to say I hope the team considers the nuance very carefully and I can offer to check in with the tribal leaders that we serve and offer additional comments over email.

Dr. Zach Penney: Great. Thanks Seth.

Coordinator: Thank you. There's no comments at this time. And again, if you'd like to make a comment, please press Star 1. Again that is Star 1. Thank you.

Dr. Zach Penney: Okay still plenty of time left, so we'll leave it open for a bit longer and see if anybody else has comments they want to say over the phone again. Again If you don't, maybe we can put up the email link again. If you want to submit written comments for us to answer on that, that would be great. So if somebody can maybe cue that up really quick. And Shirley, let us know if anybody else pops in there, but we can show this...

Coordinator: There are a few more comments, sir. First comes from Jennifer Hagen. Your line is open.

Dr. Zach Penney: Okay.

Jennifer Hagen: Thank you. Hello again. So I was looking through the questions that you've asked for input on, and I wanted to return to the Regional Ocean Partnership category. And Question Number 3 is about what types of activities related to ocean resource management?

And I think it's really important to understand when I was talking about the momentum that the West Coast Ocean Alliance has achieved as a Regional Ocean Partnership. You know, we've been watching what's been going on in the northeast region with offshore energy development, and we're starting to see it knocking on our doors here, specifically in Northern California and Oregon. Some things look like they might be happening off of southwest Washington coast.

And this is a whole new ballpark for everybody, at least in the northwest having offshore energy and trying to figure out how we're going to have all these comparable new uses on the ocean and still support sustainable fisheries. And to achieve an understanding of that balance, we're going to need information and analysis and questions will need to be answered.

So right now, there's, um, the policy where those companies specific to offshore development companies that are looking to lease areas are not footing the bill for what it costs us as managers to respond, understand.

And then you add the further complication of tribal fisheries treaty off reservation fisheries cannot move. And so that is a huge complication that eventually may have to be dealt with as well. So just to let you all know that we are thinking about these things both in the alliance forums and here at home in La Push. Thank you.

Keelin Kuipers: Thank you Jennifer. That's exactly the kind of input we need on the issues to address for this program.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next comment comes from Gerald James. Your line is open.

Gerald James: Yes. You're asking all the questions of us, and obviously a lot of us aren't real happy with the current system. And but what I would ask and probably will be able to respond right away, but what's your report card on the success of what you're doing in the system that you have, not that any one of you is responsible for everything that's been done, but there needs to be an evaluation of what success is.

The other piece, I guess more directly answerable, is what's your timeline for responding to the issues that have come up and how is that going to proceed?

Dr. Zach Penney: I might be off but I mean, I think the comment period for this particular thing, I mean the comment period closes on March 22, but in regards to the report card, I'm going to go ahead and take the mulligan and say, I haven't been here long enough to know exactly what classes you're talking about, but maybe Barry or Carrie can elaborate a bit more so.

Gerald James: Yes, I guess I'm looking at the report card of where is salmon. Obviously, what we're doing is supposed to be addressing that issue and we're not being very successful on many, many, many fronts. So what is being done to assess? The - you know what do you change if we're almost extinct?

That's that's I guess the base question, not do we continue doing what we've been doing. Obviously, that isn't working. But how we do - how do you move forward in seeing something that's obviously not working?

Hard question, and I don't expect that right away, but if we're giving these comments now, the time frame for getting back with some kind of - what's your thoughts on is it going to change anything or if it's continuing on with what's been going, what's been happening and how that process works or, you know, just getting back to some of that?

Dr. Zach Penney: Now, I, you know, for myself, I mean, I think it gives us some good things to think about. And I, you know, it's my first moderation for NOAA. I think what I'm, you know, this is a listening session and that I guess my observation is, you know, um, you know, direct consultation with the tribes would be held in a different form, not in front of other tribes. So I think that's why I'm having trouble answering.

So, you know, we have that logged down and so we'll take that back. And I do appreciate the comment.

Coordinator: Thanks.

((Crosstalk))

Rick Spinrad: Yes Zach, Rick Spinrad, and if I can make one quick comment on that. I think that's a critical issue. The whole set of performance metrics, outcomes, indicators of success, all of that that, that is an extremely important point for the whole of the Infrastructure Act.

And I've been having exactly that discussion with the secretary. It - we can't give you a pat answer to that right now, as your question indicates Gerald. But

I can tell you that but the question is one that we are struggling with right now.

And so I think part of it boils down to how much we will expect the individual project definitions to include the kind of performance metrics that they think are most - that the folks who are carrying out the activities think are most appropriate.

There's levels of indicators specific to the project, but then on the more - on the larger strategic level, which I think is what you're alluding to. So at that point, well-taken, one that is getting a lot of attention at the highest levels and is actually quite relevant to the full \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill that Congress passed a couple of months ago. So thank you for the input.

Gerald Smith: Yes, and really concerned that we're really good chameleons. We can on a project level, make things look really good. But on a collective level obviously, that isn't working. So this is actually a piece where we need a bigger picture here that we're all accountable for. So but thanks.

Dr. Zach Penney: Thank you. Shirley do we have other folks in the queue?

Coordinator: Yes, sir. Next comment comes from Albert Smith. Your line is open.

Albert Smith: Thank you, Albert Smith, Mayor of Metlakatla, Alaska. I had some - I apologize. I had some technical difficulties getting on the WebEx, so I missed a bunch. And then when I got connected, I couldn't get the audio to work, so I had to use the call in line.

Will there be some notes or whatever you guys will share with all of us after and so we could get caught up on what was - I hear a lot of good questions coming out for the - that's all I have. Thanks.

Dr. Zach Penney: Yes. There - you know, the call's being recorded. We have folks taking notes from a couple of different places. So yes, there will be a log of this afterwards. And if you didn't hear the email, it's up on the screen now if you can see that.

I guess those that are just calling, then I should make sure that you understand what that email is. If you're just calling in, written responses can be submitted to [infrastructure.tribal@noaa.gov](mailto:infrastructure.tribal@noaa.gov). And, you know, please put in a chat if you want us to, or I guess again, if you're on the phone, email us and we can get you that. But Shirley do we have any other comments?

Coordinator: Not at this time. Again, if you would like to make a comment, that's Star 1. Thank you.

Dr. Zach Penney: Okay, and I kind of rambled through that. So one more time. If you are just on the phone and not looking at the PowerPoint, the written responses, if you want to submit something to us, that's [infrastructure.tribal@noaa.gov](mailto:infrastructure.tribal@noaa.gov). So I-N-S (sic), - R-A-S-T-U-R-E-T-U-R-E.tribal T-R-I-B-A-L@noaa, N-O-A-A.gov, G-O-V.

Coordinator: Next comment comes from Jennifer Hagan. Your line is open.

Jennifer Hagan: I'm back. Thank you for this opportunity. I - since nobody was in the queue, I thought I'd fill in the void here.

So on the fifth - fish passage restoration, I like the way that you're thinking as far as these co-op, a cooperative agreement with NOAA staff who have expertise. We find that, you know, we've got a lot of culverts, for example, or other barriers that we've identified through the years.

And sometimes there isn't quite enough money to do them unless they're a really big one. We have big ones and little ones. But it's often with a small government like Quileute tribe is, the number of staff you have and areas of expertise can be something that limits you.

And having access to other experts that you can work on throughout a program or project to remove fish passage barriers would be really handy, I think, because then we don't have to go out and hire somebody to fill that part. We can work with NOAA on it. So just wanted to say, I really like Item Number 2 under that, that you're thinking that way.

Grants are always a challenge. You know, we all would like set asides and not have to compete against each other. But you know, this is a good step forward. Thank you.

Dr. Zach Penney: Jennifer.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next comment comes from Laura Pevan. Your line is open.

Laura Pevan: Hello. Sorry, I think much of my comment/question was from the last person who spoke accidentally.

So yes, our tribe does not have a large number of employees and oftentimes there are quite a few - sorry, I apologize. I'm fisheries biologist for the Chickaloon Native Village in Alaska. And my question is about all these small fish passage projects that it would be awesome to work on in the Matanuska River watershed and surrounding areas.

Oftentimes, those seem to be done by DOT or the borough. So I guess this is the comment would be that oftentimes it can be difficult to know which projects they are working on both those entities, as well as the Army Corps of Engineers due to multiple reasons, one of which is just that it's sometimes really difficult to communicate to all the different groups that need to be communicated with, such as tribes, for their consultation.

And the other thing would be, do you have any recommendations or feedback for working with these entities on, you know, basically construction projects that maybe we have less expertise than they do, but the funding would be coming with us if we applied for it? Like, what kind of cooperation would you guys like to see in order to award funding with these organizations and I guess any feedback on that sort of thing, because that's going to be a challenge for us and our short staff situation. But thank you very much.

Coordinator: Thank you. Again, if you would like to ask or make a comment, Star 1. Again, Star 1. At this time, there's no more comments in queue.

CarrieSelberg Robinson: Well, jump in there real quick on that last comment. I appreciate the examples that you gave of where things work for you and where you find things challenging. I think we can incorporate that into what we're thinking. So thanks very much for the comment.

Coordinator: Our next comment comes from Gerald James. Your line is open.

Gerald James: Yes, I guess in another, - some of you are familiar with what happened up in the south fork this last year, and there's no mechanism to address it. So it's - if it wasn't for Nooksack and Lummi screaming at the top of our lungs, we wouldn't even have got empathy.

So the - you know, when we have an endangered species listed stock and 25 hundred of them die in low water and high temperature and there's not a single response from the feds or the state. It's only the tribes that yelled and screamed. And we're trying to find resources to address it in. It's, you know, we're just get funneled to the system that exists.

And I just don't know where do we turn when that's the kind of system that we've got. So it's just It's basically begging for some assessment of the processes that exist. Whoever created him and whoever follows him, I'm not looking for to point at Barry since he's leaving and but to say, "Look, what we're doing isn't working. We need an assessment. Not just how do we figure out how do we squeeze this in?"

But, you know, given the circumstances that exist, and it's not just the Nooksack. But that there are several of the systems that are in the same shape, and it just seems like (unintelligible). So, you know, looking and whether that's in Alaska or on the coast or inside Puget Sound this system isn't working for us and would like to see a team put together to do some thinking about how do we fix it? Thanks.

Dr. Zach Penney: Gerald.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next comment comes from Mike Crewson. Your line is open.

Dr. Zach Penney: You there Mike? We're not - we're not hearing him, Shirley.

Coordinator: Is your line muted, sir? Can you try un muting your phone?

MikeCrewson: That might have been it. Can you hear me now?

Dr. Zach Penney: We can hear you now?

MikeCrewson: Okay, I'm sorry about that.

Dr. Zach Penney: No problem. Go for it.

MikeCrewson: We have had trouble connecting too. I was asked - wanting to ask specifically about these different funding types that you list here, like the PCSRF funds and the latter, the last one, the Regional Ocean Partnership funds given what our concerns are.

But we're trying to - our big - so they talk a lot about tribal priorities here and I'm with Tulalip Tribes in Puget Sound, but we have ocean and coastal management concerns and issues but like with the marine survival of our salmon, for instance.

And we're coordinating collaborative sampling throughout Puget Sound right now and we call it - Ocean and Coastal Management is the name of the

funding source under it. But for that particular one for the Regional Ocean Partnership Funds under there they talk about the, you know, like the West Coast Ocean Alliance.

And when I looked that up because I didn't even - have even heard of it before, I realized that the coastal tribes are on that. Is this - is that just for coastal tribes then or what, because of the things that they describe where, you know, we have ocean and coastal, you know, can - you know, the whole marine survival issue that we're concerned about is ocean and coastal management. But does that - is that for of coastal tribes?

Dr. Zach Penney: Lauren yes, can you comment on that, please?

Keelin Kuipers: Absolutely. Yes, so that would be four tribes working through. So in the example that you gave working through the West Coast Ocean Alliance so and in coordination with them. So I wouldn't necessarily say that it would just be limited to two tribes that are specifically coastal. But it is related specifically to Coastal and ocean management issues and priorities.

Coordinator: Thank you. There are no further...

Dr. Zach Penney: Okay thanks (unintelligible).

((Crosstalk))

Dr. Zach Penney: Oh, was there a second portion to your question Mike, about the Pacific Salmon Cost Recovery Fund before we move on?

Okay, I'm not hearing that. I think we can go ahead and go to the next one, Shirley.

Coordinator: Again, if you'd like to make a comment, that's Star 1. Again, that's Star 1. Again at this time, there's no comments in queue.

Dr. Zach Penney: And yes, just a quick time check, it is 2:05 Pacific Time, so it would be 1:05 Alaska time and getting kind of late there on the East Coast, but yes, we have about a half hour left so still plenty of time for comments. We'll leave the line open.

And Shirley I'll probably just give it at about another minute or two, and if nobody else pops in then we can go ahead and maybe consider wrapping it up for the day.

Coordinator: Yes, sir.

Dr. Zach Penney: So folks give it a think if there's anything else that they want to ask. I mean, this is like, you know, from - how I understand that - understand this and reading the room and again being a relative newbie to NOAA, you know, this is probably, you know, the earliest that they've done one of these consultations for this type of funding from what I understand.

So again, to reemphasize that, you know, this is not the last conversation we want to have about this, it's the first. So there will be other opportunities in the future. We will be providing, you know, the comments that were received from today at a later date, once we keep on getting them, so folks will be able to access that. So anything else Shirley?

Coordinator: Yes. Next comment comes from Albert Smith. Your line is open.

Dr. Zach Penney: Okay.

Albert Smith: Thank you again, Albert Smith from Metlakatla and Indian Community in Alaska.

I was just curious if you guys could email us the PowerPoint as I had to dial in. I couldn't get the audio on the WebEx to work. So if you could email PowerPoint out to everybody on the line there and along with the questions and answers, the notes, would be greatly appreciated. And thanks for putting this together and look forward to the next one and hopefully we could figure out the technical difficulties of trying to get the audio on the WebEx. So thank you.

Dr. Zach Penney: Yes, thanks Albert. And for those that aren't aware, this PowerPoint's actually on the Web site. I wonder if we can put that into the chat, maybe. I don't have that at my disposal at the moment, but maybe someone can throw that in the chat for those that are at least on the WebEx piece can find that. Oh. just correction, it will be on the Web site and they're doing it right now. So my apologies.

Shirley, are there any other comments...

Coordinator: (Unintelligible).

((Crosstalk))

Dr. Zach Penney: ...for folks in the queue?

Coordinator: Yes, sir. Next comment comes from Gerald James. Your line is open.

Gerald James: Yes. I just realized that I don't see a PowerPoint. I can see all of you guys, but they don't see a PowerPoint. But the - I guess I'm trying to follow-up with Mike. Mike's question, I think was based on can inside tribes participate in that group, the West Coast Ocean Group? What's the rules around that group, not that we need another group to be involved in but see that I think was his (unintelligible).

Keelin Kuipers: So we can follow up separately on that one. Thank you.

Dr. Zach Penney: Thanks Keelin.

Coordinator: Thank you. There are no comments at this time.

Dr. Zach Penney: Okay well, we'll leave it open for at least another few more minutes, got about 20 minutes left before we hit the time we had allocated for this. But if we end early that's okay too.

And again, just to reemphasize that there's still time for written responses and the comment period for this closes on March 22, 2022. And if you arrive really late to the meeting, if you were trying to figure out how to make a comment verbally, it's Star 1 just in case.

And sort of outside of the provisions, maybe, you know, comments also, if you - if folks have other types of platforms they think might be more helpful for you as tribes to access these sort of discussions, please feel free to let us know what those are in anything submitted in writing -- appreciate that.

Anybody in the queue Shirley?

Coordinator: Two more. Next comes from Mike Crewson. Your line is open.

Mike Crewson: Sorry about that. Yes, thank you. Mr (James) was correct that and that's what I was asking about, because the issues that we have that were described under that item but also in - under the PCSRF item were about tribal priorities and about what we need to do right now.

But we need to be able to coordinate and establish monitoring programs and whatnot so we understand what these effects are from climate change in ocean and coastal resources. We're on the ocean. We're just in Puget Sound. I'm not saying that it's an emphasis on coastal. But I believe there is collaboration that needs to be set up that can include all of the coastal tribes that are already doing this type of work.

So we've talked about it in the tribal resilience and ocean and coastal management like out in force and discussed this kind of monitoring. But it's a need that we have. And I'm not sure. Where we should be trying to look for those funds if they're not really intended for monitoring marine effects in Puget Sound and on the coast, because the fish go out there for 99% of their growth. So they're not only in Puget Sound, but we all have an interest in this.

And I don't know exactly where to look for this because we're trying to coordinate a Puget Sound-wide program right now. And so if there are funds coming down the pike, like which ones are more, which ones aren't for that, I guess, is what I'm asking, because this is a top priority for us?

Dr. Zach Penney: And Keelin, I wasn't sure if you had anything to add on that one?

Mike Crewson: Can you still hear me?

Keelin Kuipers: I don't but yes. Yes, we can. So we'll follow-up with you separately on that and make sure that we're we're directing you kind of in the right direction here in terms of the funds that are available under the infrastructure bill. I think that was...

Mike Crewson: Yes, I would suggest...

Keelin Kuipers: would be helpful to have an offline conversation. Yes.

Mike Crewson: ...do that. Jennifer, who's on with Quileute is that one of the coastal tribes that participates in the West Coast Ocean Alliance? And what do you...

Keelin Kuipers: Yes.

Mike Crewson: ...can you say anything about other tribes participating that are, you know, collaborating with you guys to get something done about marine survival issues? Are we - is it only for coastal tribes?

Keelin Kuipers: Not necessarily, but it is again around broader set of coastal issues. So I think it would be good for you to coordinate and talk with some of our folks that are more directly involved with the West Coast Ocean Alliance and the West Coast tribes for this program. And we can figure out how to make sure that connection is happening if it isn't already. So we will definitely...

Mike Crewson: All right.

Keelin Kuipers: ...follow-up with you Mike. Yes.

Mike Crewson: Thank you.

Keelin Kuipers: Thank you. Yes, absolutely.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next comment comes from Jennifer Hagan. Your line is open.

Jennifer Hagan: Good afternoon again. I - since I'm circling back around to your questions, under Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund Question Number 4, are there ways to determine allocations between tribes and tribal organizations?

And for us in the northwest, we have the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission of which all the 22 treaty tribes in Washington state are a member of. And we have a policy in place where we don't - they don't compete for funds with us, but we also decide collectively, the tribes will decide if there's something that we want funding to go to the commission on. So I imagine CRITFC and some of the other tribal organizations have some kind of safeguards like that in place.

And on the funding also, I think the real challenge here when we're talking about salmon recovery is that we have a lot of populations that are listed species, ESA listed and all that comes with that. And then there's situations like what we have here this morning the reason I was late on the call was we were having a very hard conversation with our - amongst our fish committee about closing our steelhead fishery and what our returns are looking like.

And we do not have any listed species in our watershed, but we are looking at diminishing returns. And so being able to put some of our investment towards populations that are not already listed is something they know is going to have to hopefully balance, and just wanted to put a plug in for that. Thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you.

Dr. Zach Penney: Thanks Jennifer.

Coordinator: Your next comment comes from Kerry Ivory. Your line is open.

Dr. Zach Penney: Might be on mute Kerry.

Kerry Ivory: Hello?

Dr. Zach Penney: Oh, yes, we can hear you. There you are. Go ahead.

Kerry Ivory: Hi. My name is Kerry Ivory and I'm the administrator for Native Village of Ouzinkie. And we have some we have some pretty serious connectivity issues here in Ouzinkie. We're a rural village off of Kodiak Island.

And I'm wondering if there's going to be some kind of recap of what was discussed during this meeting, because I got kicked out on my phone three times and I was unable to connect via computer at all. So I missed a great deal of the discussion.

Dr. Zach Penney: Yes, there will be a summary of these listening sessions. They're going to post the transcripts from the calls on the NOAA Legislative Inter-Governmental Affairs Tribal Resources Web page. And we can have somebody follow-up with you Kerry and make sure that you have the correct link to that. But yes, the answer your question is yes. A summary will be provided and they'll repost to the transcripts.

Kerry Ivory: Oh thank you, I really appreciate it. I felt so bad because I kept trying on the computer finally did the call in, and then I got on and listened for like 15 minutes and it kicked me out. And then I couldn't get right back on. So I yes, I basically missed half of it. But thank you for letting me know there will be a summary.

Dr. Zach Penney: Yes, I'm sorry about that. But...

((Crosstalk))

Kerry Ivory; Well it's not your fault. It's one of our greatest needs in rural Alaska is Internet, stable Internet, and we're not there yet. So but thank you -- really appreciate all of the information I have gotten during this teleconference.

Dr. Zach Penney: Thank you. And we'll try to touch base with the other parts of Department of Commerce that might be handling broadband on that stuff. Any other comments from the queue Shirley?

Kerry Ivory: (Unintelligible)...

((Crosstalk))

Coordinator: Next one ...

Kerry Ivory: Thank you.

Coordinator: ...comes from Gerald James. Your line is open.

(Gerald James): Yes it seems this hasn't come up. I've got to bring this piece up. It doesn't do us any good for us to come up with our greatest plans and our priorities, if NOAA persists with what it's priorities are and they're - they don't meet our priorities.

For example, if the habitat, ranks high among NOAA's view of the world but it's not where we need the resources spent. We can apply for all the grants we want and waste our time spending it there. If it's not going to rank and going to get funded, we've wasted our time.

So there's a dual process going on here where what we're looking at what our needs are for our system. NOAA's looking at it from a different set of perspectives, and they're not meeting, so we're or missing in the night here.

So something needs to be done to address the differences there because like I mentioned before, we don't have the resources to go spend the amount of time it takes to put together a good proposal. Can it just be ranked where it won't get funded? So we need to be on the same page. Thank you.

Dr. Zach Penney: Thank you, Gerald.

Coordinator: Thank you. There are no questions on queue - comments in queue at this time.

Dr. Zach Penney: Okay. There is nine minutes left, so what we did last time and give it another minute or so. Many folks have seemed to think a bit harder. And if there's one last question they want to ask, forget to press Star 1 and you'll pop up in the queue. So let's give it...

Coordinator: Yes.

Dr. Zach Penney: ...a minute.

Coordinator: I actually have one sir, comes from Karen Gillis.

((Crosstalk))

Coordinator: Your line is open.

Dr. Zach Penney: All right.

Karen Gillis: Some - there have been a couple of - thanks again for hosting this session and allowing us to speak on all of these issues and opportunities.

And I wanted to kind of piggyback off a couple of previous comments and that's that we had a little bit of a struggle with the first question, which is are there modifications or refinements needed to increase accessibility to these funds and it goes on, because we didn't exactly know what accessibility meant. But to us, we - where we are incessantly and not just through PCSRF but in so many ways, chronically underfunded.

My first thought was expertise capacity to build strong applications like a previous person said. And it's not that we don't believe our application is strong. It's just we have a very basic lack of financial stability for these kinds of things. And we will remain underfunded because it's just a bigger problem outside of PCS, PCSRF.

But I wanted to ask, just I don't need to say anything more, but what it really meant and what that question really meant. Thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next comment comes from Gerald James. Your line is open.

Gerald James: But I'm just wondering, there seems to be no responses to that. If there - does NOAA feel that they set different priorities than the tribes? And is that an issue in your mind?

Dr. Zach Penney: I mean I think that's a good question Gerald, but I think folks came here specifically to talk about the three provisions of the infrastructure bill. I mean, I think again, like what I said earlier, I think that was one that, you know, I think, you know, for example, but I think Barry is heading to the Puget Sound

tomorrow. But that's kind of more of on the, you know, the tribal to NOAA conversation. But you know, this point, I don't have a good answer for you, and I'm not sure other folks do either so...

Gerald James: Well I hope that there's some analysis of the system and that there's some response to that because that's what we're experiencing that we don't rank very high if we don't - if we do monitoring and assessment of the success of a project. It doesn't rank.

And if we don't know whether what we're doing is actually functioning it - it's almost worthless. We can't - we can't follow-up with a project so we're left in the blind as to whether what we did worked or didn't work and how do we adjust if it didn't or how we do more of if it did work?

Gerald James: So that's kind of a cycle that we're in her, so thanks.

Dr. Richard Spinrad: Hey Zach this is Rich Spinrad. I feel the need to weigh in because I think there's some underlying set of questions that are really crucial with respect to how we are moving forward strategically.

And I would just say that, you know, I want to Roger up and let everybody on the call know but I certainly hear that. We are moving out in our tribal consultations in a way we've never done before. So that's a good news and a bad news story, right? It means we're recognizing the need to do this more formally in a more forward leaning fashion.

We've never had a position - literally, the position that Zach is filling now is a new position. So part of this is us learning how to do this, how to do this right,

how to do consultations right, how to have a sustained, strategically aligned dialog.

There's been great work regionally. Certainly Barry for example has worked - has been working on these issues on behalf of NOAA for quite some time. But I want to assure you, in my capacity as NOAA administrator that part of this, arguably we're here to talk about the three provisions that were called out by Congress in the infrastructure bill.

But there are some really fundamental issues that you are bringing up in your questions. We're not saying we're not going to answer those. What we are saying is that's important in the grand scheme of how we move forward in our tribal relations, tribal consultation.

So please understand I'm listening carefully. I hear you. We don't have immediate answers for some of the bigger strategic issues, but I assure you, we are taking these comments on board.

Coordinator: Thank you. There are no comments...

((Crosstalk))

Coordinator: ...thank you, at this time.

Dr. Zach Penney: And thanks for that, Dr. Spinrad. That was helpful for me as well.

We have about three minutes left, so I'm going to leave it open one more minute. I know it might not be enough time to get a full comment in, but so I

think there might be a few of us can stay on longer if another comment does come in. But just let me know if anybody pops up in the queue Shirley.

Coordinator: Yes sir.

Dr. Zach Penney: But I already covered some of this, you know, as we wait. You know, if there are more questions in the line, you know, we, you know, we can stick around a bit longer. But you know, for the next steps with comments, you know, we're committed to providing the summer listening sessions for those that either got kicked off or came in late.

You know, those transcripts from the calls will be posted on the NOAA Legislative Intergovernmental Affairs Tribal Resources Web page. And yes, we intend to release a summary of the comments we receive and how we'll consider those comments and our discussion of these three provisions. So that's where we're at with this. And again, those - the comment period closes on March 22. How we doing Shirley?

Coordinator: There's another comment sir. Again it comes from Gerald James. Your line is open.

Dr. Zach Penney: All right.

Gerald James: I - thanks. I - you know, as I've told Barry many times, I do appreciate it, we do appreciate the efforts that you as individuals put forward and appreciate the comments about the these will be being looked at.

And just to as several others have mentioned, our people are in the dire stress. And we're acting out in that context of trying to get the system moving to address not 100 years from now, not 50 years from now, but tomorrow to meet the needs of our people that were guaranteed by treaty.

So that's the context in which I'm as Barry often grimaces about, I'm really harsh because my people are harsh on me and all of us that are involved in natural resources.

So I'm - none of this is aimed at any individual and it's not any of one of you's fault. I'm not looking for blame. I'm looking for solutions and to - for you guys to be bold in making those solutions available.

So thank you very much for listening and as usual, I talk way too much but I'm too old to stop. Thanks.

Dr. Zach Penney: Yes appreciate it. One more check Shirley, do we have anybody else in the queue?

Coordinator: Not at this time sir.

Dr. Zach Penney: Okay. Well it's 2:30 Pacific Time, so if folks have anything else, they want us to submit there is a way to do that by writing your response into [infrastructure.tribal@noaa.gov](mailto:infrastructure.tribal@noaa.gov). Comment period closes on March 22, 2022.

I personally want to thank everybody for attending today -- really appreciate it. I'm not sure. I guess maybe offer it up to either Carrie, Barry, Keelin or Dr. Spinrad if you want to offer any closing comments.

Carrie Selberg Robinson: Just thank you.

Dr. Richard Spinrad: Well I can't help myself, Zach I'll just say a quick word. First of all, for those of you who had trouble accessing the system, the platform, rest assured I did as well and I'm the administrator of this organization. So you're in with many of us. There are some lessons we've learned with respect to technology from this. Thank you for bearing with that.

Let me just briefly say I really appreciate the quality and the candor of your comments and input. It's been extremely valuable for me to hear it, and I would like to think it's going to help us move forward. Again as I said at the start, I look forward to this as the start of the dialog that I think is so critical in the kind of success we were all alluding to in our comments.

And with that Zach I'll throw it right back to you to close this out.

Dr. Zach Penney: Thank you, Dr. Spinrad. Okay I think that's it. Thank you all for attending today and yes, look for the summary and the synopsis at a date coming soon. So (*native language*). Thank you.

Coordinator: That does conclude today's conference. You may disconnect at this time, and thank you for joining.

END