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Hugh & Isabelle Dymont
P.O. Box 995
Bethel, AK 99559
907-543-3351

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Title: Statement in Opposition to Proposal 41 Creating a Bethel Non-Subsistence Area

By way of introduction I will provide the personal background that may give ~~me~~^{you} some insight into the issue before you. I have lived in the Bethel region for nearly twenty-five years and employed throughout that time as a high school teacher by the Lower Kuskokwim School District. Early on, I also had seasonal employment as a commercial crewman in the small boat, Bering Sea herring and halibut fisheries of Nelson Island.

My wife, Isabelle, is Yup'ik and is from a large extended family from the village of Toksook Bay approximately 110 miles west of Bethel. She moved to Bethel when we married. I have been elected and appointed to the Bethel City Council and have served as mayor.

Proposal 41 appears to be incomplete. It fails to address the two questions related to who benefits and who suffers if adopted, nor does it address how the quality of harvested resources be improved by adoption.

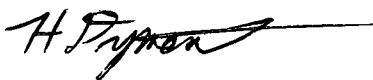
Most importantly, the proposal provides no explanation or defense as to why Bethel should no longer be considered a subsistence area. Other than population size, nothing has changed in Bethel relative to the cultural and economic importance of subsistence food gathering to the community's people.

The Division of Subsistence's 2013 household harvest survey determined that the average Bethel household consumes 580 lbs of subsistence foods yearly. Economically this is tremendously important in a region where fuel oil and gasoline, at its cheapest, is \$7.00 a gallon. But these foodstuffs are spiritually important to many, and probably most, people here as well.

For example, when I share moose or salmon with my elderly father-in-law in Toksook, or my neighbor, or hunting partner, in their minds, what I've given them is gift similar in many ways to a religious sacrament. It's resource of this world that bears protecting, but it's something sacred too because it is also a life giving resource provided by the God they believe in. It took me many years living here before I began to understand this.

Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any other help in this matter,

Sincerely,



Hugh Dymont