

Mr. Chairman and Board Members

My name is Chris Carr. I live in Portage Creek Alaska on the Nushagak River – the heart of Nushagak king non sport fishery – where my wife Leona, the only life-long Native resident of our village, operate the Portage Creek Store and Lodge, and rent skiffs and outboards to sports fishermen. I'm also a registered Alaska Big Game Guide, and have represented Portage Creek on the Nushagak Advisory Committee for the last 20 years.

Before I fished crab in the Bering Sea and gillnetted in Bristol Bay for 12 years. But the price of a limited entry permits in the 1980s was out of my reach; I couldn't afford to buy a permit and feed my family. The lack of other employment here forced most families to relocate, and the school was closed. Leona and I are presently the only year-round residents of Portage Creek.

I'm here to today to urge you to adopt the revisions to Proposal 239 recommended by the Nushagak Advisory Committee.

As first written, Proposal 239 would prohibit the use of bait in the Nushagak king salmon fishery. To do that would put me and my family out of business.

The NAC revisions to Proposal 239 remove references to bait -- but limit king salmon fishing tackle to single barbless hooks.

You'll find the discussion in the NAC minutes in AC Comment 3 on pages 11, 12 and 18. The NAC recognizes that eliminating bait will have serious negative economic consequences to local businesses – from air taxi operators, hotels, grocery stores, storage yards, lodges, boat rentals, fuel distributors, Native and non-Native land owners, as well as Sate of Alaska sport fishing license and king salmon stamp sales – all of which generate hundreds of thousands of dollars for the local economy.

Lower-than-expected king salmon returns to the Nushagak closed the sport fishery in 2010. That, in combination with the national economic slowdown, showed the business that depend on the sport fishery a bleak picture of their future if bait is prohibited. Participation declined by half, and many businesses on the river shut their doors. Many of the sport fishermen that come to fish the Nushagak have stated in no uncertain terms that they will not return if bait is prohibited. **If that occurs, my wife and I will likely be out of business too.**

What will I do then? Well, I hope the Board has the good sense not to lift the 32' boat limit, so that I could afford one if I have to go back to commercial fishing. In all seriousness, few Bay area resident fishermen will be able to compete with bigger boats.

And I'd urge you too not to expand drift permit stacking to allow one person to own and fish two drift permits. If the price of drift permits doubles like it has for set net permits, the door to entry is closed to me and the majority of Bristol Bay residents.

Thank you.

Chris Carr
Portage Creek, AK