



OBI Seafoods
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OBI Seafoods supports the Area H Cook Inlet ESSN fishers in their efforts to petition the B.O.F. under policy 5 AAC 96.625 to accept for review the emergency petition submitted by the ESSN fishers. The ESSN fishery is managed in response to Sport Fish management for the Late Run King Salmon Management Plan. The ESSN fishers are submitting this petition in response to the 3/2/2023 EO closing the Kenai River late-run king salmon sport fishery based on a preseason forecast. A decision made without the usual and customary in season assessment of information collected on Kenai River late-run king salmon abundance and forgoing the opportunity of experienced local biologists to manage fisheries based on that data. We at OBI Seafoods would like to express our concern to the Board of Fish and the administration of ADF&G over the loss of the effective management tool the ESSN fishery is in controlling the escapement levels and timing of the primary commercial species; Kenai and Kasilof River Sockeye salmon. The current fisheries management model in UCI (Upper Cook Inlet) has little concern for large number over escapements in primary species while managing for the small numbers of late run king salmon. The current lack of information on survival of King salmon smolts during years of overabundance may also have implications on the survival of stocks of late run King salmon. OBI Seafoods supports the Board of Fish in creating a management tool giving the stocks of greatest yield equal importance as the stocks of late run king salmon in mixed stock fisheries. The ESSN fishery is a vital part of the commercial fishing economy of the Kenai Peninsula, supporting permit holders; their families; crews; 3 processing plants; their employees'; local suppliers and businesses. The closure of the ESSN fishery in this manner may have implied allocation issues within the Kenai River stakeholder's user groups. Thank for your consideration of this issue,