BRISTOL BAY
Regional Seafood Development Association

March 10, 2023

RE: Record Copy (RC) comment on Nushagak King Salmon Management Plan

Dear Board of Fisheries Members,

For the all the reasons explained in our previous written comment (PC58), we believe the Board of Fisheries (BOF) should not make any changes to commercial fishery regulations until Chinook salmon enumeration can be estimated with more accuracy and reasons for poor Chinook salmon abundance is better understood. We supported Proposal 11 in PC58, but our board has not had enough time to collectively decide on whether to support changes to that proposal.

We urge the BOF to recommend the following research and management projects be prioritized for funding and resources by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G):

1. Develop improvements and/or new methods to enumerate Chinook salmon escapement.
2. Implement a creel survey to better count sport-fish harvest.
3. Examine the potential efficacy and practicality of implementing Chinook salmon migration corridors in the Nushagak district (to allow for Chinook salmon migration while avoiding costly fishing closures).
4. Research and estimate Chinook salmon mortality in sport fisheries as a result of catch-and-release harvests.
5. Design, fund, and execute a study that investigates whether high sockeye escapement impacts Chinook salmon abundance and productivity.
6. Design, fund, and execute a study to better understand why Nushagak and other Chinook salmon stocks are struggling.

We cannot provide a cost estimate for these studies at this time and would prefer to let technical experts guide study design, but again we urge the BOF to support these important research needs.

Our understanding is that the idea of Chinook salmon donations from the commercial fishery to local residents does not have broad community support, and if that is indeed the case, we would like to retract recommendation #5 in our written comment. We continue to support all other recommendations and comments submitted in our PC58.

Sincerely,

Andy Wink

Andy Wink
BBRSDA Executive Director

TEL (907) 677-2374 • INFO@BBRSDA.COM
3705 ARCTIC BLVD #1188, ANCHORAGE, AK 99503
bbrsda.com • bristolbaysockeye.org • facebook.com/bbrsda

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