

Madam Chair and Board of Fish Members,

Thank you for your time today and throughout this process. I would also like to thank all the AC across the state for their endless hours. Below are further comments in regard to proposal 157.

Proposal 157

Regardless of whether you are a good fisherman or not run failures happen. In Southeast Alaska, that was less than three years ago, in 2020. We've seen these failures happen in all regions. Rather than wait for government bailouts, some fishermen diversify to other fisheries to keep their operations running and keep their crews making a living for their families. Southeast Salmon forecast is lining up to be another weak salmon run. These small changes to existing regulations aren't designed to allow monopoly, and it's important to consider the hoops one must be able to navigate to make multiple boats, gear groups and seasons operate successfully. Some years it has made financial sense to stay in one area and not to have migrated, and other years have been ones that we have been lucky to have done so.

Not allowing fishermen to hold and fish their seine gear card and drift gillnet gear card doesn't stop fishermen from participating in these two fisheries in the same calendar year as it is completely within the boundaries of the law to hire a deckhand who owns a permit and still continue to operate the vessel as they would with their own personal permit card. There are permit leases displayed on every brokerage website and posts on social media showing crewmembers who own permits hocking themselves to the highest bidder. This can be considered to be a price driver just as much as anything else as permits

become a bidding war before the season. Then once reached an agreement, that same crewmember could jump ship halfway through the season leaving the owner of the operation and the associated crew high and dry so to speak, because the permit holder has little to no risk, and generally no financial burden to be considered, other than the value of their permit.

Consolidation is a word I continue to hear with negative connotation, and I want to point out that there should be no reason why a hard-working career fishermen should be denied the right to enterprise and develop their operation and the seasons that allow it to be financially efficient. I'm simply asking for my operations right to become combined into a single more effective or coherent whole.

Consolidation has existed within commercial fisheries since the inception of the industry. Fishermen are inherently migrant and it's been our pattern to spread risk this way from the beginning. Whether we seine herring, longline groundfish, troll salmon with hook and line, dive for sea cucumbers, tender salmon in one region and seine another, one thing has remained constant since the beginning, we have a tendency to consolidate. Every fishery above should have, in theory, created monopoly. Yet they haven't. There are more fisheries and more permits in almost all cases then there are people who are willing to invest and work hard enough to participate in them. This proposal doesn't create monopoly, it creates clarity.

I apologize for my absence during these meetings, I am home in Sitka currently gearing for our spring seasons, and as much as I wish I could be present, I can't be. Thank you for your time.

Matt Kinney