

**Alaska Board of Fisheries
Teleconference**

July 26, 2012

Meeting Summary

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) met by teleconference on July 26, 2012, for the purpose of discussing an emergency petitions concerning the Cook Inlet setnet closure. Seven board members were present. Public listen-only teleconference sites were available at Kenai, Homer, Wasilla, Anchorage, and Juneau. The audio of the meeting was streamed on the Alaska Board of Fisheries website.

The first petition addressed by the board requested that setnet fishing in the East Forelands statistical area of Cook Inlet be opened to help keep the Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon escapement within the range set by regulation. The board agreed to take no action on the petition as the support of the petition was withdrawn by the author.

The remaining six petitions also concerned setnet fishing on the Kenai River but the actions requested varied. Board members inquired about the Chinook and sockeye salmon runs and possible harvest opportunities to provide the setnetters. Because the petitions were received less than 24 hours prior to the meeting, board members were worried about making responsible decisions without having adequate information for their consideration.

Board members were sympathetic to the setnetters affected by the closure, but were also concerned about the Chinook salmon escapement. It was noted that a huge amount of time and work including public testimony went into the development of the regulatory management plans, and there was concern with making changes through the emergency petition process, which doesn't allow for public testimony and more deliberate decision making. Because the sockeye setnetter restrictions go away on August 1st, the board felt the time period was too short to make changes.

The board voted to take no action on the remaining six petitions. The Agenda Change Request process may allow the board to address the issue prior to next season. The industry was encouraged to work with the department on potential solutions for the board to consider.