

Theo Chesley

NELSON LAGOON, AK 99571

RC82

Chairman of the board, Honorable Board members...

Thank you for letting me testify...My name is Theo Chesley....I grew up in Nelson Lagoon Alaska and I am an Alaskan resident that has fished in area M for 36 consecutive Salmon seasons...I have participated in the North and South Peninsula drift fisheries and also in years past the Nelson lagoon Setnet and drift fishery.....I currently hold a Area M drift permit....And once again we are having to defend ourselves at the board of fish....I Would like to testify today about proposal 179...This proposal was submitted by the Lower Bristol bay advisory committee....It Addresses the June Fishery and reducing fishing time...It states that the people most likely to suffer if we are cut back in the June sockeye fishery are, and I quote "200 Seattle based fisherman"...The real story is Alaskan residents of Area M will suffer....So I would like to address the proposal..I'm not sure where this advisory committee got their facts from, But it is far from the truth...Alaskan residents that live in Area M communities are here trying to hang on to what we have in the fishery..So lets stick with facts and not fiction....For the record I will enlighten the attendees of this meeting to the actual number of Non - resident fisherman based on fact ...Out of 399 Area M permits issued, 119 are non residents permit holders....which is basically 27 percent...And even in the Area M drift fishery which is part of that overall number, of the 162 permits that were issued, the number of Non - resident permit holders stands at only 68. Again...We are all here trying to save what we have by hopefully keeping our fishery status-quo.....If the June fishery is cut back Many local Alaskan-full time residents of the Alaska peninsula and Eastern Aleutians will suffer...And not only resident permit holders, but also locally hired crews and small local businesses as well....The mainstay of the local economy is certainly based on salmon....This is fact and not fiction. I wanted to set the record straight, because it gets my attention when sensitive issues are dramatized by the opposition...And since this advisory committee opened the door about non residents permit holders, I thought I would throw out another interesting fact...Out of 1875 Area T Bristol bay drift permits issued, 1013 are non - resident.... that's 1013....That is almost 60 percent of out of state fisherman participating in the Bristol bay drift fishery...Thats a lot of revenue leaving the state of Alaska each and every year...Now I do not want to point fingers or separate fisherman based on residency...I think it is pointless and not constructive, and personally I have nothing against out of state fisherman...If they have a State of Alaska Limited entry permit, That permit gives them to the right to fish Alaskan waters.... The point I am trying to make is...When we talk about who is really going to suffer if any of our salmon fishery in Area M are cut back, lets stay within in the truth...And the truth is, if any of our fisheries are cut back and especially the June fishery it will directly affect resident Permit holders and the fulltime residents of Area M ...So I respectfully ask the board to please keep in mind that 73% of the permits from Area M are owned and operated by Alaskan Residents, Because these are the families and real faces that will suffer economic hardship if we see a reduction of fishing time or area....Thank you for your time....