

Moses Kritz Testimony

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr. Chair and members of the Board, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to come before you today. My name is Moses Kritz representing my tribe Traditional Council of Togiak and myself. Our values are economic development and economic sustainability of our community. We started our own fish processing company Togiak Seafoods, partnering with Copper River Seafoods.

We support the WASSIP study that was done because we need to support spawning of our salmon in our river system throughout Bristol Bay for the benefit of all the fishermen from Chignik to Area M to Bristol Bay to Kuskokwim to Yukon and Norton Sound, for everyone's benefit. It is my understanding that there was some discrepancy in the findings of the study concerning Togiak and the interception of Yukon/Kuskokwim bound salmon. The study admittedly had a very hard time differentiating the genetics between Togiak bound salmon and Yukon/Kuskokwim bound salmon. Having skewed data makes the percentage of fish being intercepted in Togiak just an estimate. Our traditional ecological knowledge has led us to a similar conclusion that interception is possible within our fishing districts in Togiak. Our neighbors to the west and north are our relatives and we look out for them as our relatives. We have five fishing districts in Togiak and we know that interception is possible in the western outer most three of our districts Osviak, Matugak and Cape Pierce. We don't fish these districts as we can determine that these fish are not bound for our terminal river system by the colors and sizes of the fish in those districts. After the exclusivity transfer date many boats come in from all other fishing districts and try to catch every fish in most of all five of our Togiak districts conflicting with interception. We have addressed this issue locally within our own community and our locally owned processor does not condone nor buy fish from these outer districts.

We do not support permit stacking because our local people cannot afford to buy another permit because of the high cost of living and cannot afford to make loan payment. The median age in our local communities is getting lower and in Togiak the median age is only 23 years old. Our populations are growing creating many more youth that need means to survive in our high cost economically disenfranchised rural communities. Commercial fishing has been our biggest tie to the western culture and the key to our survival adapting to it. Permit staking has proven to lead the permit market to dry up and to inflate. The availability and affordability is important to all but the necessity of it is fully realized in rural Alaska. The majority of fisherman that reside within our communities have fishing as a primary sole source of income contrasted to others that just come pay our high cost of living for two months out of the year to supplement their income. Permit stacking has made set net permits not available and has inflated the price to the point of not being affordable to our local residents. This isn't a fair means of dividing the ownership and opportunity. If we have permit stacking it will lead to something similar we have experienced in Togiak with our herring, consolidation of the fishing fleet benefitting very few and driving the prices through the ground. We need to make more jobs not less.

Once again I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.
Respectfully, Moses Kritz