



"Village with a Past, City with a Future"

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Testimony Before the Alaska Board of Fish

Good Morning, the City of Kenai appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony before you today.

My name is Rick Koch, I am the City Manager of Kenai.

The City of Kenai is a unique municipality in Alaska.

Subsistence fisheries, commercial fisheries, commercially guided sportfishing, a personal use fishery, and non-guided sportfishing activities all take place within the corporate boundaries of the City of Kenai.

In fact, with the exception of the commercial drift fleet all of these fisheries take place on or over lands owned by the City of Kenai.

Kenai, is by the definition provided in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, a "Fishing Community."

Kenai is "a community which is substantially dependent on or substantially engaged in the harvest or processing of fishery resources to meet social and economic needs, and includes fishing vessel owners, operators and crew, and United States fish processors that are based in such community."

As such, Kenai should merit a seat at the table in the decision-making process when its interests are directly affected. The City has provided written comments addressing eight proposals which will be before you.

The City of Kenai respectfully requests the City's comments be given the deference intended for a Fishing Community provided in Federal Law.

The remainder of my testimony will be limited to the Personal Use Fishery conducted by the State of Alaska on lands owned by the City of Kenai each July 10th through July 31st.

In three words, "Out of Control."

The City of Kenai has never been consulted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, nor this esteemed Board when making decisions that affect lands owned by the City of Kenai.

The City of Kenai, to protect the assets of our municipal corporation is forced to undertake maintenance and habitat protection efforts that in 2013 cost over \$450,000.

The City of Kenai has had to construct over 3 miles of fencing to attempt to protect environmentally sensitive grass dunes at the mouth of the Kenai River.

To attempt to minimize bacteria and animal attractants on our beaches the City must manage up to 2 million pounds of fish waste by utilizing tractors to rake fish waste below the tideline.

To attempt to minimize health issues from human waste on our beaches the City provides and maintains, up to 12 times per day, over two dozen permanent and temporary toilet facilities.

To attempt to minimize solid waste disposal on our beaches the City provides over three dozen dumpsters on the beaches and in other locations.

A portion Proposal 278 requests that the Board of Fish prohibit and/or eliminate the authority of the Commissioner of Fish & Game to open the personal use fishery to 24 hours per day by emergency order.

The City respectfully requests that the Board of Fish support that portion of Proposal 278.

In order for the City to safely maintain its property it is imperative that clear access is provided on the City of Kenai's beaches without conflict with fishery participants.

Operation of heavy equipment on the beaches is inefficient and more importantly unsafe when fishery participants are present in dark conditions between 11 PM and 6 AM.

I invite the Board of Fish to conduct its next meeting to consider Upper Cook Inlet Finfish, in Kenai so that many directly affected Kenai Peninsula residents may participate.

I respectfully request that you select me to be on Work Committee A for Personal Use Fisheries.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you.