

RC95

Public Comment Give to Task Force March 2013

Good Morning!

Mr. Chair, Board members, Thank you for giving me your ear.

I am here to speak to prop 429. I would like to share both something I like about what came out of the Task Force, and something I disagree with.

First of all I agree with the creation of an OEG range of 13,000-30,000 for one simple reason, Our Department of Fish and Game says the goal range that provides 90% MSY is 13,000-28,000. This range is scientifically defensible MSY management.

Now for what I don't like about the Task Force recommendation- Get rid of the Friday window.

I sit on the Anchorage Fish and Game Advisory Cmte. and for the last couple of years hardly a meeting goes by without somebody asking me if I know of a way to not catch Kings in my setnet. Well, one way is to leave my nets on the beach. But we're here today to try and avoid total closures. I am telling you all that there is a way to modify the management plan in order to maximize sockeye harvest while minimizing Chinook harvest. I know this without a shadow of doubt, at least for where I fish. Fish the setnetters on abundance of sockeye. Consider this; During a one week period in the 2011 season I fished 4 openings. This week produced just under 60% of my total sockeye for the season while catching less than 18% of my total Chinook. So I caught a majority of my sockeye during that week while only a fraction of my Chinook. On my biggest day, 26% of my season's sockeye, 1 single 3 pound chinook.

My fishery is a sockeye fishery that exploits the King run on average at 13%. Last year my fishery lost a potential to harvest millions of sockeye. By the way...after 13% of last years run and we're still at the upper end of the escapement goal. Now, I'm the father of a 4th generation East side setnet permit holder. I have been a fisherman my entire life. I have fished from Bristol Bay to the Gulf of Alaska, and I had never experienced anything like last season. After spending over \$25,000 preparing to harvest less than 100 sockeye for my season, you can imagine how I felt when I read the Task Force Mission Statement saying we are looking for ways to provide Fishing opportunity for all users during years with low abundance of Kenai River Late run Chinook, while still achieving adequate spawning goals. I would Challenge this Board to stay true to this statement.

Joel Dones