

Tom Tilden Record Comment
February 23, 2016

Mr. Chairman, Fish Board Members, staff: thank you for allowing me to testify. My name is Thomas Tilden. I am a subsistence and commercial fisherman in the Nushagak District. I have fished in other districts but my main river is the Nushagak. My son and grandchildren are my crew. I now live in Dillingham but grew up in Portage Creek, a village along the Nushagak.

I would like to speak in favor of proposals 22, 23 and 155. When you look at the amount of miles that make up the Northern District, it is a huge district: approximately 125 miles of shoreline. These proposals, 22 and 23, will bring the district to a reasonable size by slicing approximately 50 miles and still allow a district with 75 miles to catch their targeted salmon.

I am very disturbed by the amount of intercept that happens in this district. Although the numbers may seem insignificant to the overall numbers of the total Bristol Bay run, they have a significant impact on some of the smaller river systems that are within the commercial fishery districts. I will use the Nushagak District as an example. Within the Nushagak District you have a lot of rivers that produce salmon like the Igushik, Snake, Wood, Nushagak, Maklung, Mulchatna, North-South Kuktuli, Weary, Nunachak, Nayakuk Rivers, just to name a few.

In the WASSIP study of 2007 and 2008, 36,347 Nushagak salmon were intercepted in 2007 and 51,049 were taken from the Nushagak District in 2008. If you just look at what

they took from the Igushik River, which is a small river system on an average of 400,000 fish--it becomes alarming because it becomes a significant number to a small river system of that doesn't have a huge number of fish to begin with. In 2007, 1,843 were intercepted and in 2008, 16,423 fish were taken! What a huge increase. Makes you wonder what happened in the years after?

To back my concern, I would recommend that you all watch the movie called "Breach." It tells about the huge number of salmon that once occupied the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts. It talks about how safety measures were put into place to protect these salmon runs. Then it sadly tells you about how salmon manager's let these river systems collapse by development, pollution, overharvesting, and in other destructive manners. They went in the wayside one by one to where we are today. Only in Alaska, do we have huge runs such as in Bristol Bay! The world's largest natural wild stock salmon! Many threats still remain and threaten this fishery, such as mining on spawning beds or near river systems, pollution, global warming, acidification of our oceans, offshore drilling and interception.

You have within your power to save the Bristol Bay watershed fishery so that generations can enjoy this natural wonder! Don't let history repeat in our part of the states by allowing an intercept fishery to destroy a world-class fishery one river at a time.

Thank you for allowing me to testify.