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Dear Board of Fish Members,

My name is Nadine Kochuten and I am originally from False Pass, AK and I grew up drift fishing in Area M. I began fishing at the age of 12 with my Dad and my younger Sisters, learning the Family business. I fished from age 12 til age 18 when I moved to Anchorage to attend college full-time. I quit commercial salmon fishing in the summer's after the 1999 season due to the low prices offered for salmon because of the farmed fish that overwhelmed the market at this time as well as further restrictions due to closures for escapement of chum salmon. This was a difficult decision to make since it was the only professional experience I had. Moving to Anchorage full-time was very hard and I still needed support from my Family in the villages who were still struggling with the low prices offered for salmon and the even stricter regulations that followed regarding closures and season's starting later. I have made Anchorage my home since 1999 after I graduated from high school and I have learned the needed skills to be able to live here away from my family. My college studies convinced me to stay connected to the Fisheries in Area M and the people I care about the most. I am currently working on an occupational endorsement in Fisheries Management and I plan on getting more involved in the Fisheries in the future.

Most recently I found myself fishing in Area M in 2013 while Salmon tendering and was thrilled to be fishing again. Then, in 2014, I thought I would be returning to Area M to salmon tender, but ended up spending most of my time in the Bristol Bay area and then finished up the season in Prince William Sound. I feel very fortunate to have participated in the commercial salmon fishery in this capacity. I was amazed at how the Bristol Bay fishery operates compared to how we fish in Area M. It is amazing that individual boats are even able to remain competitive while fishing in such close proximity to other fishermen. The shallow water and more narrow fishing area allow Bristol Bay fishermen to be able to use shallower nets, which would not work for Area M fishermen who fish in the deeper waters of the Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea areas and therefore I am opposed to proposal 163.

Area M has one of the smallest populations of people in all of the state of Alaska, and we rely on commercial fishing as our main source of income. Any major changes to our fisheries, either boundary lines, additional closures and gear restrictions will impact us economically and could be catastrophic to the future of our villages. I am

also opposed to proposal 185 and 186, which are trying to change the regulations for the Dolgoi Island area. This area has always been fished by Area M and the amount of fish they catch here are a tiny percentage of the fish headed for the Chignik area according to recent studies. I also oppose proposals: 22, 23 and 24 which are attempting to move the boundary line to south of Port Heiden because it will decrease the value of our permits and our overall fishery. Many supporters of these proposals keep saying that Port Heiden residents cannot fish in this area, which is not correct. They are able to purchase an Area M permit just like any other person could. They chose in the past to get Area T permits instead of Area M permits. Just today I noticed at least 8 Area M drift permits for sale online on just one website. Other supporters of Area M have given statistics as well on this small number of fish that we catch in this area as well compared to the overall catch in Bristol Bay. Their needs for a subsistence fishery should not have anything to do with Area M's commercial fishery. Alaska law states that subsistence fishing take priority over commercial fishing activities.

Area M is not intercepting a large percentage of fish Bound for Bristol Bay as they continue to assert year after year after year. We are an already struggling part of Alaska as we deal with the high cost of living as well as extremely high cost of fuels for both our homes and fishing vessels. We rely on our historical right to fish in the current areas that have been included in Area M for over a century. I strongly encourage you to take into consideration data from more than just the last few years and especially last year, 2015 that the Chignik area is using to attempt to intervene in our Dolgoi Island section. Perhaps we had record numbers of fish in this area because stocks finally came back after previous years of flooding as well as possible great management in the last few decades! We do not take every chance to pick apart the fisheries East and North of Area M every year as they continue to do to us. It is sad and confusing at the same time coming from other Native communities who are struggling with the same economic issues as we do.

Thank you for your consideration on all of these issues.

Sincerely,
Nadine Kõchuten