

Verner Wilson III
Record Comment: Proposals 155 and 159
February 26, 2016

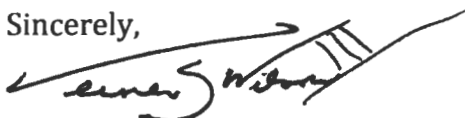
My name is Verner Wilson III. I am a Bristol Bay commercial and subsistence salmon fisherman born and raised in Dillingham. I have a Master of Environmental Management degree from Yale University and go drift netting with my dad and brother--usually in the Eastside districts of Egegik and Naknek/Kvichak.

That's why I would like to focus on proposals 155 and 159. You heard plenty about the WASSIP and Boatright studies. I heard some say that us in Bristol Bay are being greedy, that what they catch in the Outer Port Heiden area is small compared to the entire Bristol Bay fishery. While that is true—they didn't mention why Bristol Bay has such a huge fishery. I want to pinpoint to a 2010 study published in the journal *Nature* titled "Population diversity and the portfolio effect in an exploited species." The study, co-authored by six respected fisheries scientists, say that Bristol Bay runs are big because of all the different freshwater streams and rivers in the region that makes our salmon runs resilient. If the salmon population in one freshwater system crashes—the other systems allow the overall population to stay relatively resilient. For Bristol Bay sockeye, it means diversity is strength.

The Area M intercept fishery in Outer Port Heiden affects the ability to understand what fish are being intercepted for each district and their respective ecosystems. It affects Fish and Game's ability to understand the numbers more, which can affect the salmon populations in certain areas of the bay. The recent Boatright study shows that the Outer Port Heiden fishery did not just affect mostly the Ugashik district one year--but they actually caught more Naknek-Kvichak bound fish another year. So it makes sense to stop fishing in this area because it is best for the scientific understanding and fisheries management for Bristol Bay's salmon. And with environmental stresses on fish such as climate change, ocean acidification and the like, this makes even more sense. Therefore I'm opposed to proposal 159 and support proposal 155.

Last summer, over 867,000 fish were caught in the Outer Port Heiden area. While that number is small compared to the 58 million fish that returned in the entirety of the bay—I remember one of the years that we had a horrible year commercial fishing in Egegik due to low escapement in that river. That underscores the argument that we need to understand what fish are being caught where—and Outer Port Heiden fishing does not allow that. I hope everyone will come to understand the Boatright study, to get a clearer picture of the science that must guide this important decision. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Verner Wilson III", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Verner Wilson III