

Submitted by: Danielle Ringe

RC 037

Hi, my name is Danielle Ringer and I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak. I grew up in a Homer fishing family and have lived in Kodiak since 2010. As my husband previously described, we moved from owning a 25-foot jig boat to a 38-foot seiner. Today we chiefly rely on salmon seining as our principal income, which allows us to live in Kodiak where we, like others, constantly struggle with high costs of living and limited fishing options to get into. If it weren't for the salmon fishery, we would not be able to live here. I also just graduated from UAF with my Master's degree studying the graying of the fleet in the Kodiak region and explored the links between local fisheries access and community sustainability. In this research over the past several years I conducted interviews with fishermen in Ouzinkie, Old Harbor and Kodiak.

I'm testifying today in opposition to proposed changes to the Cape Igvak Management plan because as a community member, a fisheries researcher and a fisherman's wife, I see that Kodiak fishermen and communities are struggling. It feels like every month a young person I know moves away. Lots of kids leave for college and never come back. This is even worse in our outlying rural villages. For example, the population in Ouzinkie went from 225 in 2000 to 161 in 2010 and has continued to drop. Permits have also been lost from our villages, with only 3 left in Ouzinkie. This coincides with an overall decline in permit holders under the age of 40 around the archipelago.

I believe proposals 51-56 would clearly be detrimental to Igvak boats, but it would also undermine our smaller, Native and rural fishermen.

The Kodiak seine fishery is often referred to as a good entry-level option within the state. However, with increasing vessel and gear costs in addition to the permit, outfitting a viable operation here costs a substantial amount for a young person. For those who are able to enter the fishery, it's still difficult to pull out a successful season and make all their debt payments.

By limiting Igvak, many boats would be displaced and concentrated around the archipelago creating more competition and imbalance. Already youth face a crisis of access, where building a diversified fishing portfolio is increasingly difficult and my family, like others, relies on salmon seining as our foothold into the industry. This issue is not just about those Kodiak boats that go to Igvak, but rather the entire fleet that counts on dispersed effort throughout our long season.

As the average age of permit holders is up 10 years since the 1980s and hovers just over 50 years old, in my opinion protecting the Kodiak seine fishery, which fosters new entrants and succession opportunities for veteran fishermen, is vital for the archipelago and state's well-being. Because of all these reasons I ask you to reject proposals 51-56.

Thank you for your time.