

Mr. Chair and Board Members, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Forest Jenkins and I currently live in Trempealeau, Wisconsin. I am the current Prince William Sound Setnetter's Association President. I have 10 years of experience in the PWS salmon fishery, including 5 years as a PWS setnet permit holder.

On behalf of myself and the Prince William Sound Setnetter's Association, I would like to speak in opposition to Proposal 44.

Proposal 44 proposes that the operation of each set gillnet and drift gillnet must be performed or assisted by a Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permit holder in the Prince William Sound Area commercial salmon fishery. This proposal is invalid, as 5 AAC 24.331 (b)(3) is already enforced as intended in the current regulations. For stationary gear, the definition of fishing site and an explanation of performing or assisting is provided in 5 AAC 39.107 (d). See Also: Selected AK Statutes

The proposal inaccurately states that there is a 'lack of enforcement of Section G that requires a permit holder to be present to perform or assist.' Under current regulations, setnet permit holders are legally operating as long as they are present at the specific fishing sites, traveling to and from other gear, traveling to deliver fish, or in any structure used for shelter in the support of the operation of net gear or other stationary gear. Under all of these circumstances, the setnet permit holder is performing or assisting the operation of the setnet gear.

The author of Proposal 44 inaccurately suggests that setnet crew members are illegally setting nets and working the gear. Under current law, setnet crew members are allowed to operate the gear, as long as the permit holder is performing or assisting in any of the ways defined in 5 AAC 39.107 (d). These regulations for stationary gear are consistent and enforced as intended in all commercial setnet fisheries across the state.

Proposal 44 intends to restrict the setnet operations to set and work all gear out of one boat. This idea is both extremely allocative and significantly jeopardizes the safety of the setnet fleet. Restricting us to operate all 150 fathoms out of one skiff and no longer allowing crew members to set and work gear would force us to unsafely travel, deploy, and retrieve gear under all weather conditions.

This proposal is extremely allocative, as we would be limited to only deploy 50 or 100 fathoms of stationary gear on the opening set, while drifters would be allowed to set and manipulate a full 150 fathoms. By the time our first 50 fathom net was set, our other beach sites would already be occupied by multiple drift gillnetters, making it impossible to deploy our second and third nets.

We ask you to not approve Proposal 44, as the current regulations are clearly defined and enforced as intended, and the author of the proposal is requesting regulation changes that would have significant effects on allocation, gear conflict, and the safety of all participants.