

RC117

January 15, 2018

From: Lance Preston, 2013 Cascade Creek Rd. Sitka, AK 99835

To: The Board of Fisheries

Dear Chairman and BOF members,

When we Alaska commercial salmon fishermen market our fish, or explain to others what our work entails, we are always proud to mention how healthy the resource is, how conservation is written into our very state constitution, how we have cooperated for decades with Alaska's Department of Fish and Game to maintain stocks and gather important fisheries data.

When we trollers, for instance, deliver our catch to tenders or processors, every salmon is counted for the Department. The species are distinguished, sizes and weights are logged, and geographical areas of catch are recorded. Fish are also scanned for coded wire tags and checked for clipped adipose fins indicating hatchery origin. Much of this important effort is made possible by utilizing a brilliant, but very simple management tool, The Fish Ticket, which both advances fisheries science and keeps us fishermen honest about where and when we're fishing and how much we're catching. I'm a huge fan of The Fish Ticket. This simple, obviously necessary instrument has helped to prevent my near century old fishery from descending into opaque chaos and overfishing. Not insignificantly, data from decades of collected Fish Tickets has helped to identify impacts made on current stocks of concern in our own rivers, and will inform plans to rebuild those stocks.

Proud as we fishermen are of this miraculous management tool, impressed as we are when met at the dock by a veritable team of ADF&G troll biologists peppering us with questions, happily patient as we are to wait while so much data is recorded in so many squares, acquiescent as we are to be greeted by state troopers inspecting our holds and measuring our salmon to the nearest quarter inch, you can easily imagine our confusion, dismay, and creeping cynicism while we wait, year after year, for our neighbors and friends in the guided sport sector to participate alongside us in fisheries management and finally begin using Fish Tickets designed for their own, plainly commercial fishery. They are allocated far too many fish and make far too significant an impact on the fisheries for their harvests to be beneath the concern of fisheries managers.

Now more than ever, with real concern for Chinooks in several of our SE rivers, we have to allow this glaring void in data collection to sink in. We also have to acknowledge the inevitable abuses to the resources allocated to the guided sport sector when there is no effective management tool in place to prevent them: the non-reporting of catches and the impacts that has on overall harvests. This embarrassing failure of fisheries science and management has to penetrate our collective conscience, not least because growing resentment and acrimony between the commercial and guided sport sectors will worsen

under the current circumstances, poisoning neighborliness and good will in our small communities.

The fish on my boat are apparently very much worth counting. So must the literally untold quantities of fish being buzzed into town on charter boats. They're all valuable; they all contribute important data for fisheries science and for an equitable fisheries management. If we are honest with ourselves, we know that until an enforceable system of fisheries management and accounting, a Fish Ticket, is crafted for and adopted by the guided sport sector, it will remain difficult even for a third party observer, let alone us trollers, let alone the earnest majority within ADF&G, to remain so innocently proud of the conservation efforts we've made in cooperation with each other for so many decades.

I regret not being able to give my testimony in person. Thank you for your time and consideration,

Lance Preston