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Rob Schwartz-F/V Zeus
Box 1533
Petersburg, Alaska 99833

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Alaska Board of Fisheries
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526

Dear Chairman Jensen and Alaska Board of Fish members,

I've been an Alaskan commercial fisherman my entire life. I started drift netting Southeast Alaska in 1966 on my father's boat when I was six weeks old. I fished with my father until I was 13 when I "jumped ship" to pursue other fishing opportunities throughout my teen years. I ran a drift net boat in Southeast, crewed in Bristol Bay and on seine boats in Southeast, and participated in herring and longline fisheries. In 1986, I bought a Southeast driftnet permit and began fishing salmon. A year later, I began fishing dungeness crab while continuing other fisheries. Like my father, Petersburg has always been my home. My four children were also raised fishing. Like me, they eventually "jumped ship" to pursue other opportunities including commercial fishing. Southeast drift netting for salmon has been economically and culturally important to our family and community for generations. It should continue to be a viable option for our young people, including our children and grandchildren.

I've seen many changes in the salmon fisheries over the decades. One example is the shift from targeting wild salmon to hatchery enhanced salmon for all gear groups. Our economic survival seems to be increasingly dependent on hatchery fish. This naturally leads to allocation issues regarding THA's and SHA's. The allocation of various species for each gear group in various areas, seems, to me, like a management nightmare. The driftnet fleet traditionally is below their pink and red salmon allocation while the seine fleet, at times and in certain areas, is below their chum allocation. This issue is complex and not easily "solved" as everyone wants their perceived share of the pie. Please make these decisions carefully. I don't envy you.

Over the decades, I've watched many of our young fishermen struggle to gain access to the fisheries. Some succeeded and some failed. Many of Petersburg's successful fisherman started out as crew members until they had the capital needed to buy into affordable "entry level" fisheries such as the dungeness crab and/or salmon driftnet. These fisheries have allowed young people "get their foot in the door". As they "found their feet", they expanded their businesses. and some eventually bought larger boats and seine permits. This has been crucial to continuing our way of life. I don't want to see these opportunities disappear.

I want all our fisheries to remain a strong part of our economy and culture while providing opportunities for our young people. It's a "tall order" but an important one.

As a board, you have the power to make decisions that affect our lives for generations. This comes with an incredible responsibility. Again, I don't envy you, but please consider this as you work your way through some very complex issues. Thank you for all your time and effort.

Sincerely...Rob Schwartz