

Subject: #159  
From: Dennis Thacker (dennisthacker@yahoo.com)  
To: dennisthacker@yahoo.com;  
Date: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 8:06 AM

I oppose #159

I have lived in Alaska since 1971. I have been employed in the SE seine fishery as a spotter pilot since 1992. I make the majority of my annual income from the herring and salmon fisheries each year.

The impact on me would be the same as if you closed any specific fishery on fishermen. I am based in Petersburg and spend a significant portion of my annual income in SE. I support local businesses in Ptg., Sitka, Juneau and Ktn.

An example:

Aircraft maintenance-	\$15-30k (Ptg, Sitka)
Fuel-	\$25-30k (Ptg, Sitka, Jnu and Ktn)
Ak. Marine Hwy.	\$ 4-5k
Local businesses.	\$ 10-15k. (hotels, food, parts, etc.)

Why would a fisherman employ a pilot?

In my case, I give the fishermen an overview of how the next fishing period is developing. Assuming we are on a 2 and 2, I spend the first day surveying the general area where we fished and where we may fish on the next opener. The 2nd closure day, in the morning, I start concentrating on a more specific area where we may fish. Quite often I discuss with area biologists what we are seeing for fish movement. By afternoon I am concentrating on specific areas for fish movement and how the fleet is moving. Our goal is to be in position in the morning with good fish traveling by and few boats. If the fishing is poor or too many boats then we are looking for new territory. That is my job. I base my recommendations on amount of the period left as how far to travel. If we have day and half left, maybe travel for 3 or 4 hours, if only half a day left, maybe just stay put. After the second day then I start over again. Typically on a 2 day opener and 2 day closure, I will fly approx. 35 hr.

The Fishermen I work with have come to trust me and my information. When we decide what area to fish, it is joint decision. They are very experienced and have suggestions where to look, based on their past fishing, tide, run size and timing. I also have suggestions based on my experience and where the last period was productive. Another advantage we have is my fishermen normally have a destination by the afternoon of the second day. They are able to spend the 2day closure in town or on anchor. Other boats spend the 2 day closure motoring around looking for fish and a place to fish for the next opening. This has an impact on fuel cost, wear and tear on both equipment and crew. Our boats fuel bills varied from \$13-17k, I know other similar size boats had over \$50k fuel bills.

In closing, I would hope the board can see through the bs accusations of illegal activities and see the aircraft is an integral part of the fishery. I find it hard to imagine a fisherman willing to risk a million dollar seine boat for some 20-30 cent pink salmon.

Thank you  
Dennis Thacker  
Sent from my iPad

