

January 20, 2018, 6:00 a.m.

Paul Olson
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Dear Alaska Board of Fish:

I am writing regarding the Unuk and Chilkat Action Plans for the troll fishery. I am a king salmon fisherman/power troller. I thank the Board for listening to hours of testimony, and recognize the conservation need to undertake measures that may increase in escapement and provide a better hope of recovery for this prized resource.

Please reconsider the July 8 opening date for the summer season. The fleet should be able to harvest king salmon July 1st. The logistics of prosecuting a coho fishery right before a king opening are awkward at best for both fishermen and processors.

I support Option B in the Unuk Action Plan for the spring troll fishery that allows some access opportunity, particularly in areas like Sitka where 200 trollers depend on those fisheries for a significant part of their season and realize the increased value of these fish – prices are typically 20% higher – or more – during the late winter and spring season. The Chilkat Plan suggests Option A, which would implement a regionwide closure of troll spring fisheries from May 29 – June 14. There appears to be an inconsistency or at least an ambiguity regarding the interaction of the two Plans. Sitka Area fisheries in particular should have harvest opportunities May 29 – June 14.

I would like to echo Jeff Farvour's closing comment in his testimony and request that the Board be pro-active and make a statement regarding bycatch of Chinook in the federal trawl fisheries. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council is considering an INCREASE in the allowable bycatch of Chinook at its February 2018 meeting. The trawl fisheries take southeast Alaska stocks migrating through the Gulf of Alaska. Current bycatch numbers are "guesstimates," at best, based on statistically biased data.

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