

CHILKAT INDIAN VILLAGE



"Yee gu.aa yax x'wan."

**An Indian Reorganization Act Village
Under Act of Congress June 15th 1935**
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RC408

January 22nd, 2018

Alaska Board of Fisheries
PO Box 115526
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Via Fax: 907-465-6094

RE: Chilkat River King Salmon Acton Plan: RC 266

Dear Chairman Jensen and Alaska Board of Fisheries Members,

On behalf of my community and Tribal member of the Chilkat Indian Village of Klukwan, I am submitting a second testimony about our traditional/subsistence salmon use and desire to fish the Chilkat River for Sockeye Salmon. To emphasis the importance of our traditional fishing custom: Several years ago our tribe started developing a Cultural Heritage Center for economic development. It was made clear to the governing body that our economic development could not interfere or damage our subsistence way of life. That mandate came from our community members.

It is my understanding that according to the ANILICA settlement eliminating subsistence fishing is done as the last resort. Every year for thousands of years our Tlingit people harvested salmon for our survival. We still rely on the salmon run for our sustenance. The Sockeye start running in the Chilkat sometimes as early as the month of May. (see photo attached) Last year Fish and Game restricted our fishing in the river creating a great hardship for our community members.

It has been customary for us to harvest the sockeye in the cool dry days of June. One of the most traditional native foods we process is half dried sockeye on the skin and dry fish strips. Half dried sockeye on the skin and dried salmon strips are made with no preservative or additives. The dry June weather provides a faster drying time for the fish, so it does not spoil/rot in the process.

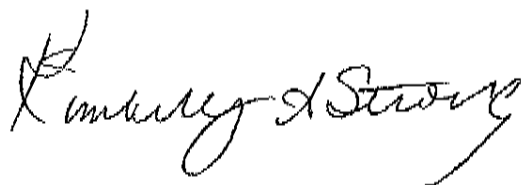
Last year's closure was a hardship and many people did not get to make their winters supply of dried salmon. We ask you again to close the commercial fisheries down in the salt water to protect the King Salmon. The by-catch of our Chilkat King Salmon by the various commercial fleets is far more then what our subsistence fishing catches.

On behalf of our small Tlingit community, we ask that you create a mechanism for making the commercial fisheries accountable for their bycatch of King Salmon and any untargeted catch that they harvest. I understand that Alaska Fish and Game has the data that tracks the Chilkat King and Sockeye Salmon through the inside passage. I deplore you to not shut our small fishing group down in Favor of the Commercial by-catch. Use the collected data to regulate the other user groups first! Why shut down our small user group that would not harvest nearly the by-catch of King Salmon as the Commercial Fisheries.

In closing, our tribe could support option "A" RC 266, maintaining status quo from last year, if we had assurances that the commercial fishing groups were regulated and fined for catching the Chilkat King Salmon. Everyone says, "We all have to do what we can do to protect the Kings Salmon run". Let's make sure every user group carries the burden.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kimberley Strong". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Kimberley Strong

Tribal President



