

Testimony To The
Alaska Board of Fisheries
Jeff Stephan
United Fishermen's Marketing Association
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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board of Fisheries.

My name is Jeff Stephan, and I am manager of the United Fishermen's Marketing Association.

I join with my neighbors and colleagues in welcoming you to Kodiak. We are pleased and grateful that you chose to schedule this Board of Fisheries meeting in Kodiak.

We believe that it is important and essential for the State of Alaska and its regulatory Boards to make every reasonable effort to conduct your meetings in areas such as Kodiak and other communities where the activity that is the subject of your responsibility is conducted.

Your presence and work here is pertinent, as it is in those other areas where commercial and recreational fishing activity have such historic and predominant economic, social, cultural and employment impact on our community economics, security, schools, families and children.

We are hopeful that the human, economic, cultural, familial and employment infrastructure that is supported by our Kodiak Area salmon fishing and processing sectors, and the associated transportation and general business activity, is obvious to you, and has impact, as it should, on your consideration of those issues that are before you.

So, again, thank you for coming to Kodiak.

We oppose Proposals 37, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, & RC 09 and we see no rationale or reason whatsoever to accept the suggested initiatives that are put forth in these Proposals

RC 09 (Proposal 37):

We support the narrative and conclusions that are included in the 4-page document entitled "Comments on Proposal 37 and RC 09, an Amendment to Proposal 37" (i.e., PC 320); such document that has been submitted by the Kodiak Salmon Work Group (KSWG).

We are concerned and disappointed with respect to the process that was utilized to develop Proposal 37, and the decision to subsequently put it out for public comment. We are disappointed in the fact that, as expressed in the KSWG document, "RC 09 is not acknowledged or listed as a proposal or a report on the webpage that applies to the Kodiak meeting, so most members of the public would not even become aware of its existence".

We sadly agree with the comment also provided in the KSWG document (i.e., PC 320) that indicates "For the board to put forward for public comment such an awkward, sweeping, and poorly developed amendment submitted by one segment of the public to someone else's proposal, on the basis of the desire of a single board member, less than two weeks before the close of public comments for a board meeting on the affected fisheries, and posted solely in a section of the board's webpage that many constituents will not know to access ... is irresponsible."

We are disappointed that a State of Alaska regulatory board, especially one that carries such authority and control as the Alaska Board of Fisheries, would execute its responsibility in such a manner as that which is exhibited in this circumvention of process, public awareness and discourse, and that you would use this process to promote a management plan that has no merit.

Cape Igvak Salmon and North Shelikof Management Plans:

I flew to Juneau in late November, 1978, to participate in the Alaska Board of Fisheries initiative to develop a conservation-oriented Cape Igvak Sockeye Salmon Management Plan. The Board worked diligently with both Chignik and Kodiak industry representatives, and ADF&G, to achieve, first and foremost, a conservation and management plan that was embedded in the conservation of Chignik stocks, while at the same recognizing and embedding the objective and need to preserve the historic participation of Kodiak seiners in this fishery, as well as the importance of preserving the distribution of the fleet in the manner that was achieved during those times that Cape Igvak was open to harvesting.

The Cape Igvak Salmon Management Plan is a conservation plan that has provided a noteworthy and successful 40-year history of conservation and management of Chignik sockeye that consciously includes the preservation of the traditional participation of Kodiak harvesters at Cape Igvak. Why would anyone wish to undertake the complex task of changing this fishery, and cause the significant harm and disruption to the Kodiak fishery that would occur as a result of this action?

The disposition and balance of our Island-wide fishing activity incorporates the environmentally sensitive and traditional fishing patterns that are well-governed by the Cape Igvak and North Shelikof Management Plans. These plans have worked well for many years, and there is no reasonable purpose or justification that would warrant a disruption of the conduct of the traditional harvest and fleet distribution in these areas, and cause the negative economic, regulatory and operational consequences that would derive from such.

We are hopeful that you will be open, fair and balanced with respect to your understanding, reasoning and the manner in which you address these Proposals.

We respectfully request that you reject these proposals that unreasonably intend to modify the long standing and carefully and purposefully designed conservation-based Cape Igvak and North Shelikof fisheries that rightfully incorporate the traditional participation of Kodiak salmon fishermen.

These plans work well, and are justified and validated by 40 years of long-standing time and tradition, and have minimal impact on non-Kodiak stocks.

There is no reasonable demonstration of information that would logically indicate that either the Cape Igvak or North Shelikof Salmon Plans cause any threat or impact whatsoever to the fisheries in Chignik, Cook Inlet or elsewhere.

Thank you.

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