

Comments to the Board of Fisheries

November 28, 2023

Hello, my name is Katie Gavenus. I am a lifelong resident of Homer. I am the daughter of a local fisherman, I personally participate in personal use and sport fisheries in Kachemak Bay for sustenance, I work locally as a place-based science educator (I teach kids science outside!) and I am on the board of a local conservation organization. I am writing this comment on behalf of myself, not my employer or the board on which I serve, but my comment is shaped by these various perspectives. Sustainable fisheries, healthy oceans, and equitable access to culturally, socially, and nutritionally important local foods are deeply important to me.

I urge you to **SUPPORT Proposal 8**. This is a straightforward regulation to limit snagging early in the season in Seldovia waters, correcting an oversight in a recent regulation change. I also support a June 15<sup>th</sup> rather than June 24<sup>th</sup> start date to snagging, based on local knowledge that fish are more likely to be brought a week earlier in some of the areas discussed. Overall, I strongly support the incorporation of local knowledge and Indigenous Knowledge for finetuning regulations like this. If the Seldovia Advisory Committee suggests that a June 15<sup>th</sup> date would be better than a June 24<sup>th</sup> start date, then the Board should take that under strong advisement.

I also urge you to **SUPPORT Proposal 30** which would clarify harvest methods for herring roe on kelp. Again, this is a straightforward and needed proposal.

I **OPPOSE Proposal 15**. The risk to wild salmon, both through incidental catch (even with catch and release requirements) and through impact to spawning grounds, is unacceptable. I think there are other creative solutions to ensure that hatchery kings in the Ninilchik River don't go to waste but, in cases of overescapement, are instead collected farther downriver and distributed to community members or the local food bank. The fact that the Central Peninsula Advisory Council – with such varied user groups - was unanimous in opposing this proposal speaks volumes and I think you should follow their lead.

Overall, I **support efforts to address the risk of rock fish overharvest in the area**. I will not pretend to understand the intricacies and nuances of all the proposed regulations, but I urge you to move forward with meaningful rockfish conservation measures.

I also urge you to consider all of the different perspectives on Proposal 35 and figure out a way to support additional research in this realm with a focus on present and projected future hatchery impacts within a changing ocean climate. I do not have any easy answers to the hatchery vs. wild fish problem, but I do believe that further research is needed on the trophic impacts of hatchery fish on Kachemak Bay species and that special consideration should be given to conserving and sustaining wild fish stocks.

Thank you for your consideration,

Katie Gavenus