

My name is Francis Estalilla and I support the current iteration of Proposal 256 banning the use of “roe” or fish eggs for bait as defined in its amended language.

A roe ban is the single most effective bait restriction to globally reduce encounters and mortality on river-caught king salmon. The Board would be wise to prohibit the use of roe in all of Alaska’s wild chinook-bearing streams, where virtually without exception, king runs are severely depressed. Prohibiting the use of roe also has the added benefit of eliminating the incentive to harvest female salmon simply to restock the bait larder.

On the Togiak River, the Larsens and their crew of guides have pioneered and perfected the use of NON-rope baits to enhance the effectiveness of artificial lures to target NON-chinook species. Their technique delivers exceedingly low rates of bycatch and mortality for NON-target chinook, while effectively enticing willful biters to strike the gear, particularly with regard to presenting jigs tipped with shrimp under a bobber to target abundant sockeye salmon. This sockeye-directed method to target willful biters is much more ethically aligned and aesthetically satisfying to the spirit of true “angling” in that the target fish is in active and willful pursuit of the gear rather than the gear being in active pursuit of an unwilling fish.

The Togiak River sport fishery is a premier destination for anglers seeking a prime wilderness experience. Paying multiple thousands of dollars to access a special place like Togiak only to snag salmon through flossing is ludicrous and greatly reduces the appeal of the destination to would be participants. Again, I must emphasize that this is a unique and premier DESTINATION sport fishery and it should be treated as such. It seems counter-intuitive to diminish the value of such a special angling experience by prohibiting low impact methods using NON-rope baits.

I urge your support on Proposal 256 as amended.