

February 24, 2024

Chair Woods and Board Members,

My name is Christine Brandt and I am an East side set netter, located North of the Kasilof River stat area 244-31 and part of Triple K Fisheries. Triple K Fisheries consists of my sons Brian and Keary and their father Gary Koski. My sons are 3rd generation and hopefully their sons and daughters, my eleven grandchildren, will continue to fish in Cook Inlet waters. Our family has fished in the traditional waters of Cook Inlet for over 50 years.

I am here today to ask you to correct a travesty of unforeseen circumstances that closed our fishing season in 2023.

At the 2014 BOF meeting proposals came before this Board that could have curtailed the loss of spawning female chinook salmon by no retention of anything over 42 inches. This proposal failed.

I would like to remind you that we are not targeting chinook salmon but instead red salmon and this is proven by the size of mesh that we use. I keep hearing from Board members, how do we know how many Kings that the set net fishermen are catching? Let me instead ask you this, how many kings go unreported in the dip net and sport fisheries? If you are questioning my integrity as a set netter then you must question the integrity of all user groups and not single out just one. Triple K has voluntarily participated in the Fish and Game taking of scale samples from chinook caught in our nets for years.

Regulations were put in place to paired commercial fishermen with the in-river sport fishery. Where was the parity in 2023 when the sport fishery was open to fish for reds, and we were closed. I am requesting that the parity portion be removed from all regulations on the East Side. Step-down measures are already in place when there are conservation concerns.

I oppose adaptive management; we have been going down this path for quite some time to no avail, the only thing I see is our time continually being reduced. Consistent management needs to be in place, nowhere else does a user group have so many regulations in place for them to operate. I believe that we need to get back to basics. By basics I mean, Monday and Thursday openers for the ESSN and back to full 45 mesh depth. It does not matter what the mesh depth is, the net is set to only open so wide whether we are talking about 45 or 29 mesh deep.

I support RC 17 written by Jeff Fox. It includes language that I was going to insert into my testimony but with his record copy he says it better than I ever could.

Closing the ESSN fishery has impacted not only the fishermen but also the community. Keep in mind that every time you talk about different means of fishing that entails cost. Alternative methods have been looked at in the past and the method in place is still the best way to harvest red salmon for the world.

I believe that there is plenty of harvest of reds available with the conservation of Kings taken seriously.

Let us be good stewards of the resources that God has provided and let it be shared by everyone. For everyone to have the opportunity as written in the State of Alaska Constitution.

This constitution is dedicated to the principles that all persons have a natural right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and the enjoyment of the rewards of their own industry; that all persons are equal and entitled to equal rights, opportunities, and protection under the law; and that all persons have corresponding obligations to the people and to the State.