Upper Cook Inlet (UCI) Commercial Fishing Announcement No. 18 opens commercial salmon fishing with set gillnets in the Kenai, Kasilof, and East Foreland sections of the Upper Subdistrict from 7:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 28, 2019.

UCI Commercial Fishing Announcement No. 18 also opens commercial fishing with drift gillnets in the Expanded Kenai and Expanded Kasilof sections of the Upper Subdistrict and in the Anchor Point Section of the Lower Subdistrict from 7:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 28, 2019.

Commercial Fishing Announcement No. 18 also rescinds Emergency Order No. 2S-04-19, which was issued on June 18, 2019. Effective at 7:00 a.m. on Sunday, July 28, 2019, gear restrictions in the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery as identified in 5 AAC 21.359(e)(3)(A)(i) are no longer in effect. Legal set gillnet gear as outlined in 5 AAC 21.331 may now be used.

On July 26, 2019, Upper Cook Inlet (UCI) Commercial Fisheries staff estimated the total Kenai River sockeye salmon run through July 25 to be 1.6 million fish. The final run to the Kenai River is projected to exceed 2.3 million sockeye salmon. As of July 25, the Kasilof River sockeye salmon run is 76% complete based on average run timing and projects a final escapement of more than 354,000 fish. The biological escapement goal (BEG) for Kasilof River sockeye salmon is 160,000–340,000 fish. In the Kenai River, average sockeye salmon passage into the Kenai River is 55% complete through July 25 and projects a final passage of more than 1.27 million fish. The inriver goal for Kenai River sockeye salmon is 1.0–1.3 million fish. Fishing in the above described waters is warranted in order to harvest sockeye salmon returning to the Kenai and Kasilof rivers.

The Kenai River late-run king salmon sport fishery was restricted to fishing with no bait beginning on July 1, 2019. According to 5 AAC 21.359(e)(3)(A) Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan, if the use of bait is prohibited in the sport fishery, commercial fishing periods in the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery, excluding the East Foreland Section, are open for no more
than 48 hours per week beginning July 1, with a 36-hour continuous closure per week beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday. With regularly scheduled fishing periods on Mondays and Thursdays no longer in effect in the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery, except for the East Foreland Section, any and all fishing time provided to this set gillnet fishery may occur only via EO beginning July 1, 2019. With this announcement, the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery south of the East Foreland Section will have fished 16 of the available 48 hours for the management week of July 28 through August 3.