

Testimony of Ken McGee
Proposal 174
February 23, 2015

Mr. Chairman, Board of Fish members, thank you for the opportunity to testify. I have been a Juneau resident for 58 years and a salmon troller since 1978.

My testimony today is about proposal 174, which I oppose. This proposal asks you to establish a Taku River Chinook management plan. The Taku is a Transboundary river and is managed to meet escapement and allocation goals under the Pacific Salmon Treaty, in addition to other Alaska management objectives for conservation and sharing. Under the treaty there are provisions for directed Chinook fisheries in Districts 11 and Canada. There is also what's called a base level catch, to provide for sport and gillnet sockeye fisheries in years when there are no directed king fisheries. Taku Chinook caught in the spring troll fisheries count against the treaty quota. All Taku fish are monitored and accounted for in some way, either under the treaty or Alaska regulation.

Management of these fisheries is very good. With the tools they already have, like emergency order authority, ADFG can respond to any need that arises and have stated as much. This makes another management plan unnecessary.

The management called for in proposal 174 would be totally disruptive to little communities like Hoonah, Gustavus, Pelican and Elfin Cove, where trollers live and fish the hatchery openings. For the

most part, these are small boat fishermen – many are handtrollers with open skiffs who use hand gurdies or sport rods.

Spring troll openings are short in duration, occur in limited areas, and target hatchery fish, most of which are produced through a 3% aquaculture tax on commercial fishermen. Some have been produced with money intended to mitigate fishermen's losses under the treaty. Fish from many hatcheries are found in the area. The spring catch rates are normally low, since the majority of the Taku fish have already moved through the area.

I started sportfishing in the Juneau area in the early 1970's and it was a far cry from what it is today. A lot of District 11 was closed to protect Taku stocks. Now the entire area is open, including Taku Inlet. There is a place called False Outer Point where people stand shoulder to shoulder fishing; it is not uncommon to see dozens of kings caught in this area in a day. You have to give ADFG credit for many years of good management. Today there is good access in District 11, very few sport restrictions in the Juneau area, and when there is enough surplus, gillnetters and trollers are allowed a directed fishery.

Another layer of management would be redundant and is unnecessary.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

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